Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of case management in community aged care on client and carer outcomes: a systematic review of randomized trials and comparative observational studies

Version: 1 Date: 26 July 2012

Reviewer: Osama Altayar

Reviewer's report:

I used the PRISMA and AMSTAR for this review.

A. Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract
   a. Results
      - Numbers are not clear. Section should be repeated and be clear!
      - Misleading in general.
      - Mortality results are misleading and should be more specific (specify the period, i.e. improved at 6 months but not at 12 months)
      - Results of client's functioning status, health status/medical condition and behavioural problems not reported or not reported adequately. And also carer's medical condition.

2. Methods
   a. Was a pre-specified protocol used? If yes, did you stick on it or you had to modify it during the research?
   b. Data extraction and synthesis:
      - Study selection process is not clear:
      = Difference in numbers between Figure 1 and the text on page 6 (141 and 144 full-text articles)?
      = How were the duplicates and articles of low relevance determined?
      = Who did the study selection? How many people? Blinded? Dealing with conflicts? How many times did you review the full-text articles and why?
      = Numbers should be mentioned under results not the methods.
      - Who extracted the data? How many people? Blinded? Dealing with conflicts?

3. Results
   a. Table 3:
      - As your studies are heterogenic: Inclusion criteria for each study should be included.
b. Effects on client /carer outcomes:
- Didn't specify how many RCT's and the quality of studies for each outcome. Can't judge the applicability of the intervention and generalizability of the results for the outcome!
- Better to specify what measures were used for each outcome by the studies (e.g. like in "functioning status of client")

4. Limitations
a. Why meta-analysis was not possible? (not clear and it "looks" possible according to the results)

B. Minor Essential Revisions
1. Abstract
a. Methods:
- Outcomes of interest are not shown.
- How data extraction was performed?

2. Methods
a. Data extraction and synthesis:
- Outcomes of interest not specified.
- Any steps to avoid double counting and piece together data from multiple reports on the same study?

3. Results:
   a. Study selection results and the flow chart should be included here.
   b. Table 3:
      - Needs editing and should be uniformed and more clear (lines in the first page and no lines in the other pages)

4. Discussion
a. Clarify the status of evidence (enough evidence or not)
b. Rephrase the sentences. Refer to the studies included in the review rather than the review when presenting results (i.e. "studies included showed ...." or "available evidence showed … " instead of "review showed …")
c. Applicability of the findings.
d. Comparison with similar/close reviews findings might be useful (e.g. reviews on case management in other populations)

5. Limitations
a. Address the validity and reporting of included studies
b. Address generalizability/applicability of the review
C. Discretionary Revisions

1. Abstract
   a. Methods:
   - Address whether analysis was performed or not.

   **Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

   **Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

   **Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

   **Declaration of competing interests:**

   I declare that I have no competing interests.