Reviewer's report

Title: Do People with Delusions Really Jump to Conclusions? Rationale and protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 25 March 2014

Reviewer: Alexander Tsertsvadze

Reviewer's report:

Abstract-Background
Comment #1: Please, provide the rationale more clearly as to why this systematic review is needed.

Comment #2: It is not clear what your research question is. Please, state your research question something in this line (e.g., “this review aimed to investigate if there is an association between psychosis and JTC bias”).

Abstract-Methods
Comment #3: Will the authors state the study eligibility criteria by informing a reader about the type of studies that will be included in the review (design, population, interventions/exposures, and outcomes)?

Comment #4: Please insert ‘study selection’ between ‘literature searches’ and ‘data extraction’ …will be undertaken by two independent reviewers.

Aims and scope of this review
Comment #5: In the statement: “We will investigate (a) whether there are a greater number of Draws to a Decision (DTD) for individuals diagnosed with a psychotic disorder versus individuals without these experiences”. Should not DTD be a smaller number for individuals with psychotic disorder vs. controls? If yes, suggest to change ‘a greater number’ to ‘a smaller number’.

Comment #6: Please, assign (c) to the statement: “A key question is whether the bias is specific to delusions, or whether it is more general to psychosis, and we will therefore also test whether DTD and JTC style differ between those experiencing delusions versus controls.”

Comment #7: In the sentence above ending “…we will therefore also test whether DTD and JTC style differ between those experiencing delusions versus controls” who are the controls? People with psychosis but without delusions or people without psychosis regardless of delusions?

Comment #8: After the sentence “In summary the moderators of effect size we intend to test are as follows:” the authors list potential effect modifiers. Should not ‘the presence of delusions’ be one of these modifiers too?

Method – quality statement
Comment #9: Suggest to delete ‘quality statement’.

Comment #10: Replace MOOSE with PRISMA statement (Moher et al).

Comment #11: AMSTAR is not a reporting guideline; it is a systematic review methodology appraisal tool. Therefore, I suggest to delete it in this sentence.

Method – Inclusion and exclusion criteria - population

Comment #12: Please, explicitly state whether or not you are going to include healthy people (without psychosis) as your controls. If you exclude them, then state why?

Method – Inclusion and exclusion criteria – additional criteria

Comment #13: Please, state if unpublished literature (e.g., conference proceedings, unpublished studies) is excluded or included

Method – Search strategy:

Comment #14: Please, create a new section ‘Study selection’ which should follow ‘Search strategy’

Afterwards, move the following text from ‘Search strategy’ to ‘Study selection’:

“In the initial phase titles and abstracts will be screened for potentially eligible studies. In the second phase, full texts of the remaining articles will be read to determine if they meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where disagreement emerges regarding the eligibility of studies, a third author (RD) will arbitrate. Where conference abstracts that are identified through the search that possibly meet the inclusion criteria the presenters will be contacted and further details sought regarding the study, in order to ascertain the studies eligibility.”

Method – Methodological quality

Comment #15: Text on methodological quality (for individual studies) should be separated from text on grading the evidence for overall quality using GRADE approach (two or more studies contributing per outcome). Therefore, please, create a new section ‘Assessing overall quality of evidence’ which should follow ‘Methodological quality’. Afterwards, move the following texts from ‘Methodological quality’ to ‘Assessing overall quality of evidence’:

“The GRADE approach (Guyatt et al., 2008) was also adopted to provide an assessment of quality at the outcome level. Within the GRADE approach, observational studies are normally automatically marked down for quality. However, for the purposes of this review, as all included studies will be observational, a decision was made not to automatically mark down the quality of outcomes in this manner. All outcomes are therefore initially rated as high quality and then downgraded based on five main criteria (risk of bias, imprecision, indirectness, heterogeneity, publication bias).”

“Both PJT and PH have completed the GRADE online learning modules (http://cebgrade.mcmaster.ca/) and have experience of using this approach.”

Method - Data Synthesis and Analysis, Subgroup Analyses and Publication Bias
Comment #16: Please, reserve the term ‘subgroup analysis’ when exploring heterogeneity of the association between psychosis and JTC outcome across groups defined by clinical features (e.g., stage of psychosis, etc…) and sensitivity analysis when exploring the robustness of the effect estimate in relation to methodological features of studies (e.g., meta-analytic method, risk of bias item, study design).

Comment #17: Please, separate ‘Subgroup analyses’ and ‘Publication bias’ sections. Move the following sentence to ‘subgroup analyses’ section:

“As noted in the review aims, a number of moderators of effect size will be explored as part of the secondary outcomes of the review. These moderator effects will be examined through sub-group analyses. Significant differences between subgroups will be ascertained using the Q-test (Borenstein et al., 2009).”

Comment #18: If you think any info referring to subgroup analysis remains in ‘Data Synthesis and Analysis’ section, please move it to ‘Subgroup Analysis’ section.

Comment #19: The sections in the text should be ordered as follows: ‘Data Synthesis and Analysis’, ‘Subgroup Analyses’, and ‘Publication Bias’.

Discussion

Comment #20: In the Discussion section, will the authors highlight importance of findings of this systematic review in terms of future research and policy implications?

Comment #21: Will the authors provide limitations and strengths of the evidence and review itself?

Comment #22: Will the authors discuss their findings in comparison with those of other studies or systematic reviews?

Comment #23: Will the authors discuss future research recommendations in light of limitations identified in the reviewed evidence?