Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparative Effectiveness of Psychological Treatments for Depressive Disorders in Primary Care: Network Meta-Analysis

Version: 2
Date: 29 January 2015

Reviewer: Frank Doyle

Reviewer’s report:

The authors conducted a network meta-analysis of trials comparing psychological treatments for depression. The study is well-conducted, but the authors need better justification regarding some specific points. The only major issues for me are whether the amount of detail on the standard meta-analyses is required/justified – since this appears to have been published already? I am also unclear as to how the OR and SMD data was combined, if it was? Or indeed the secondary outcomes? Details below.

Discretionary revisions

Abstract

The Background sentence is an aim, not the background?
Pharmacological treatments are reported in the Methods, but not in the abstract?

Minor essential revisions

Background

It is unclear from the authors description whether the Barth meta-analysis (ref 5) included or excluded studies which had reduced HCP time with patients?

Line 105 – typo ‘of’ should be or?

Methods

The last update searches occurred in December 2013 – could or should these be updated again, given that this is now 2015?

Results

Why isn’t the flow chart part of the results rather than a supplemental piece? The flow chart does not indicate how many articles were chosen as a result of reviewing other authors meta-analyses (i.e. how many, if any, articles were missed by the authors search terms and execution)?

The HADS would be an unusual outcome measure in such trials, and our work shows that it is of questionable validity (e.g. Cosco, T. D., et al. (2012). "Latent structure of the Hospital Anxiety And Depression Scale: A 10-year systematic

Was there no other measure for this study (Naeem 2010)?

There is a typo in supplemental 1 Table 3.2 - HAD-D = Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale subscale depression.

Major revisions

Methods

Lines 169-70 – I think it would be better to supply an example for readers of how responder/remission data was imputed.

Analyses

It would be useful to know why the authors did not transform ORs to SMDs, in order to combine all the data? This approach has been recommended and implemented before, e.g.:


While these are discussed separately (ORs and SMDs), I do not see separate results for each method if they were treated separately?

It would be useful to describe in more detail ‘consistency models’ etc – not all readers will be familiar with these terms? I am not.

Overall, I think this section could do with more detail as there are no space constraints for this journal?

It is unclear why the Forest plots for direct comparisons are being reported, if they have been reported previously? The order of the comparisons changes – favours treatment/controls changes from 4.2-4.3 – why? If these are to remain, along with the funnel plots, they should be referred to in the Results.

232 - How exactly did citation 29 disagree with the main body of evidence?

I may be missing something, but the authors wished to examine the effects for the outcomes response to treatment (primary) and remission and post-tx scores (secondary). Where is the NMA plot for the secondary outcomes?
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests