Reviewer’s report

Title: Family-centered depression treatment for older men in primary care: a qualitative study of stakeholder perspectives

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Reviewer: Matthew Menear

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This is an interesting article describing a qualitative study to explore the perspectives of depressed older men, their families, and primary care providers on how to involve family members in the treatment of depression in older men. This is an important topic and one that many primary care providers struggle with. I thought that the article was very well structured and thoughtfully written. Below are comments that I hope will further strengthen the paper.

- Abstract: In the methods section, the study would be more accurately described as a "cross-sectional qualitative descriptive study" as opposed to an interview study. Qualitative descriptive studies are a recognized qualitative design (see paper by Neergaard et al 2009, BMC Medical Research Methodology).

- Introduction: This is a very good introduction, however it should end with a clear statement about the research question or objective.

- Methods: There is only a minimal mention of the qualitative study design (in the analysis section). The authors should clearly mention early in the methods that they have conducted a qualitative descriptive study and justify why this is appropriate.

- Methods: The authors mention discussing certain pre-determined topics during interviews, was there a conceptual framework guiding the data collection process? If not, how were these topics of discussion determined and by whom?

- Methods: It was not clear if interviews were conducted with both older men and their family members together or whether all interviews were conducted with a single person at a time.

- Methods: Some additional details should be provided on the interviewers and members of the research team involved in the analysis, for instance whether they were health professionals or not or whether there was diversity in the analysis team with respect to cultural background (potentially important in this study).

- Results/Discussion: The authors mention in their Methods and Limitations sections that they had a high representation of Latinos in their sample, yet did they notice any differences in perspectives between Latino participants compared with other participants? This is worth
exploring as previous studies have shown differences in views on patient activation and shared decision making in Hispanic populations relative to other ethnic groups (e.g. Patel & Bakken 2010, DE Cortes et al 2013).

- Results/Discussion: The results seem to suggest that family members are not currently very involved in the care and treatment of the depressed older men, but is this in fact the case? Did family members discuss how they may already be supporting their husbands or fathers? If family involvement in this sample was low, this could be reported as a finding.

- Discussion: The authors mention that clinicians should explore the preferences of older men regarding the involvement of families in their treatment and that for some men it could be better to explore family involvement only after some time has passed, such as mid-treatment. However, it is possible that some caregivers will also be at risk for experiencing stress and mental health problems given the burden of caring for their loved one, and ideally primary care clinicians should be concerned by the health of these caregivers. This possibility should be acknowledged by the authors, as it has implications for the content of guidelines for family involvement in depression care (i.e. need to care for the family and not solely the individual affected by depression).

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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