Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative study on older primary care patients' perspectives on depression and its treatments - Potential barriers to and opportunities for managing depression

Version: 0 Date: 20 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Alice Moult

Reviewer's report:

The paper explores the perspectives of German older adults in regards to depression and the treatment options available. The study employed semi-structured interviews to stimulate a description of the older adult's knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and experiences to gain an insight into possible barriers and facilitators for the treatment and management of depression in older adults. The findings suggest that older adults expressed multidimensional views on depression and its treatment, although some individuals were well informed others had misconceptions about treatment options and believed that there was a lack of understanding for depressed people within society. The study also highlighted that older adults held differing views on the importance of the General Practitioner's (GPs) role in the treatment of depression.

The study is insightful as it is the first piece of qualitative research that explores the views and experiences of depressed older adults in Germany. The paper builds on a good, up-to-date, body of evidence on this research topic. The research recruited a mixture of males and females and reported the necessary demographic details to capture a picture of the participants. The analysis, in my opinion, was appropriate and the conclusions are well supported by the results. The paper clearly indicates the implications of the research findings and the possible practical application of the research. It is relatively well written apart from a few word specifics.

I believe that there needs to be clarification in regards to the inclusion criteria stating that the participant had to have been to their GP within the last six months to indicate if this consultation was for depression or not. I also believe further clarification is needed in terms of the three participants denying personal experience with depression as the study describes the participants as twelve depressed primary care patients. From my interpretation of the paper, participants were recruited only if they scored ≥ 6 on the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) at baseline or at the 12-month follow-up in the AgeMooDe cohort study. The paper suggested a score of ≥ 6, which suggests depressive symptoms, was present in all participants. Therefore, this raises ethical questions in terms of the participant being aware of the implications of their score and inclusion criteria for the study. I believe the paper needs to describe that all of the participants were made aware of the nature of study and the inclusion criteria, which could suggest that even though the participants may not have personally identified as depressed within the interview, the participants GDS score may have indicated depressive symptoms. Too add to that, the paper acknowledges that participants completed the GDS between one and nine months prior to the
interview, I think that the paper should acknowledge, as a limitation, that the scores from nine months ago may have altered.

I also believe that the paper should offer a justification for using the age range of over 75 years old as other studies use various other cut off points to determine what constitutes an older adult (Hasin et al, 2005). Too add to that, the paper describes the participants as 'elderly' a term which some individuals may find derogatory.

In my opinion the lack of clarity regarding the GP consultations and participants denying any personal experience of depression needs to be addressed throughout the paper, along with a justification for the age range and renaming the participants a more suitable term such as 'older adults.' However, the study is interesting and does add to the body of literature on older adults' views and experiences of depression and treatment options available.

References


Wording

Line 61 - The word social networks might be more appropriate than social environment

Line 141 - Table One, a capital letter is used at the start of words in columns ID, education level and personal experiences with depression but not in gender, age, marital status and living situation.

Line 239 - Unsure what the meaning of "attending physician" is, the author uses GP elsewhere throughout the paper.

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

No

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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons
CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal