Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence, aetiologies and prognosis of the symptom dizziness in primary care - a systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 28 Oct 2016

Reviewer: Guido Schmiemann

Reviewer's report:

Thanks for this review aiming to summarize the current knowledge on the etiology of the symptoms vertigo and dizziness in primary care.

The methodological approach is described very clear and transparent, I do not have any major objections.

I would like to comment mainly on the presentation of the results and conclusions.

Minor comments:

- Page numbers are missing

Prevalence of the symptoms

L25-28

The denominator for the prevalence of vertigo and dizziness is described as "all patients seen in consultation" and as "in relation to all consultations". I presume that the same denominator is meant and would recommend to use the same phrasing to avoid misunderstandings.

LL 34

For the study of Wun et al some information on comorbidity is given. As the comorbidity (especially cardio-vascular disease) has a major impact on the prevalence/etiology of the symptoms I would suggest to expand the information on comorbidities in the included studies.
Perhaps it is useful in the discussion/conclusion that a standardized assessment of selected comorbidities should be presented in studies on the etiology/prevalence of symptoms?

Results

The authors included studies from different health care settings. The majority of studies have been conducted in health care systems with a gate keeper, some studies are from countries with direct access to specialists care. This lack of a filter might have an impact on the etiology of the symptoms and I suggest to include this in the discussion (or, if possible even in the result section).

Discussion:

When assessing patients with dizziness and vertigo the patients age and the duration of symptoms are relevant aspects in the history and helpful for the further diagnostic work-up. It seems as if this information was not sufficiently described in the studies included. I would recommend to comment on the relevance of these (and perhaps further) factors.

Implication for research:
I suggest to expand on this aspect and I would encourage the authors to give further recommendations on "How should future studies exploring the prevalence of dizziness and vertigo look like- which data should be assessed and presented?"

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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