Reviewer's report

Title: An overview of systematic reviews on the collaboration between physicians and nurses and the impact on patient outcomes. What can we learn in primary care?

Version: 0 Date: 13 May 2017

Reviewer: Lazaros Belbasis

Reviewer's report:

The present study is an overview of systematic reviews (SRs) examining the collaboration between physicians and nurses and its impact on patients' outcomes. The researchers performed a systematic literature search to capture published systematic reviews and meta-analyses on this topic. This is an interesting overview of the literature on the collaboration between physicians and nurses. Below there are some comments on the manuscript.

Overall, the background is well-written and provide an essential rationale for the collaboration between physicians and nurses.

In the methods, the search strategy is adequately reported. However, the remaining of the section should be re-organized. First, the details on the selection process should be presented in the section of Results. Also, the eligibility criteria are not clearly presented. The authors mentioned that SRs describing teamwork or collaboration between physicians and nurses were included. More detail on the eligibility criteria should be reported, because the definition of eligible papers is vague. Did the authors include any SR? Or did they focus on SRs of studies with a specific research design (RCTs, cohort studies etc.)?

Furthermore, the authors could extract additional information from the eligible SRs. They could scrutinize them to identify any reason for not conducting a meta-analysis on the efficacy of the collaboration on patients' outcomes. Also, they could report whether a quantitative assessment of the primary studies was conducted by the published SRs. If such an assessment was available, a table summarizing this information could be very informative to map the methodological quality of the published observational studies on this research topic.

In the section of results, the authors could separately present the eligible papers performed only a systematic review and the papers that additionally performed a quantitative synthesis/meta-analysis. Some measures of descriptive statistics could provide useful information (e.g., median number of studies per SR and meta-analysis, median number of examined outcomes etc.). Furthermore, additional methodological details of meta-analyses are very important to assess their methodology (these characteristics are not included in the AMSTAR checklist). The authors should report whether in the eligible meta-analyses a measure of heterogeneity (e.g., I-square, Cochrane Q, tau-square) was presented, and whether a statistical process for small-study effects was performed.

Table 2 is very informative to map the findings of published meta-analyses. However, the column "odds ratio" should be renamed to "effect size", and the authors could adequately report the effect size metric for each outcome. For example, in the first meta-analysis, the effect size metric is beta coefficient, correlation coefficient, log-transformed odds ratio or a type of standardized mean difference (it is not an odds ratio). Also, additional information should be included. A column identifying the comparison that is relevant to the reported effect size. Also, a
measure of between-study heterogeneity should be reported for each effect size, along with the total number of studies per outcome and the total number of participants per outcome (if available through the published meta-analysis).
The discussion is generally well-written. A statement on the quality of available SRs should be included, along with a recommendation for improvement in future SRs on this research topic.

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 am able to assess the statistics

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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