Reviewer's report

Title: Attitudes and preferences towards screening for dementia: a systematic review of the literature

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Reviewer: Fang Yang

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It is an interesting topic which merits more attention and research in an increasingly aging society. The review provides a better understanding of the attitudes of both the general public, patients, carers and the health care professionals. However, there are some issues that the authors might have to consider before publication.

Major points:

Method:
1. Line 102: the review included studies over quite a long period (no time restriction). However, with the development of medicine and technology, people’s attitudes toward dementia screening may change. As mentioned in line 232, the oldest included study was published in 1994. I was wondering if there are differences in the attitudes between the older studies and those more recent ones. If so, those older studies may not well reflect what people think of dementia screening, and may impact the policy making etc.

Results:
2. The review lists two sets of themes, one for the general public, patient and carer, the other for health care professionals. What about the frequency for each theme? It will provide a clearer picture of the attitudes by including the frequency.
3. Line 191-193: The findings are grouped into patients, carers, and the general public, and health care professional, and the reasons were given. However, I think a stronger justification is needed here. Moreover, within the first group, given that patients and their carers experience the suffering from the dementia, they may be more likely to have a positive attitude toward the dementia screening. Thus the experience and attitudes of patients and carers may differ from those of the general public. Do you have any findings on this? It would be great to discuss this in the discussion section.

Minor points:
4. Line 120: This review only includes pen and pencil tests or any tests that can currently be administered in primary or community care settings to screen for dementia. It would be great to have a brief introduction or summary about the tests that were discussed in the included studies.
5. Line 208-209: There are already 15 reviews in the literature. What does this
review add to the existing reviews? It would be great to discuss it in the
discussion section.

6. Line 272-274: is there any evidence that relate to stigma, rather than the exact
word “stigma”? Research on depression shows that both patients and health care
professionals are reluctant to talk about depression because of stigma. I am
curious whether the stigma is a barrier to the general public/patient/carer even
when they do not specifically say the word “stigma”.

7. Line 314-315: does this study relate to the benefit? Perhaps there might be
other reasons for their refusal to receive a diagnostic evaluation.

8. Line 332: the theme is related to the patient, carer and the general public. However, by just reading the title of the citation [36], it seems that the quote is
more from the perspective of primary care physicians, that is, the attitudes of
health care professionals.

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.