Reviewer’s report

Title: What works in falls prevention in Asia: A systematic review and Meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials.

Version: 0 Date: 17 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Maw Pin Tan

Reviewer’s report:

Overall comments:

The authors conducted a systematic review of randomized controlled trials for prevention of falls in community-dwelling older persons in Asia. The paper was meticulously written and provides a good update to what has been included in the most recent Cochrane review with additional attention to Asia. The value of the systematic review, however, is limited by the non-inclusion of non-English language databases or studies, which has been duly acknowledged in the limitations section. While the search and data extraction was done meticulously, the authors were not clear about whether studies were conducted for primary or secondary fall prevention. The authors also tended to refer to effective interventions as "successful studies" and ineffective interventions as "unsuccessful". This should be avoided as it may lead to misinterpretation of the value of negative studies by novice readers.

Title: The title does reflect the content of the paper, however, the authors should consider adding randomized controlled trials in the title, as they only included randomized controlled trials in their systematic review.

Abstract: This is well written and accurately highlights key aspects of the paper. Please refer to overall comments, but suggest replace 'successful' with 'effective'

Main Manuscript:

The authors tended to refer to effective interventions as "successful" and those with not net benefit as 'unsuccessful'. Could I suggest they stuck to 'effective', and 'ineffective'?

Page 7, Lines 10-16- suggest rephrase "However, there were a number of limitations of the review", as the scoping review identified studies performed so far, and it's not really a limitation of the review as such if the studies that had been conducted were non-randomized.

Page 13, Para 2- Sherrington et al's article was a review article. This should perhaps be mentioned in the discussion rather than in the results section to avoid confusing the reader.
Page 18- The metanalysis subsection of the results section is a little hard to follow. Perhaps the authors needs to clarify somewhere the different falls outcomes reported by the studies. The authors also need to clarify why environmental and multiple interventions were not included in meta-analyses. With so many exercise interventions reporting number of fallers, has the authors explored looking at specific exercise sub-groups for conducting meta-analyses, eg primary/secondary prevention, group/individual or Tai-Chi/non-Tai Chi, for instance.

Discussion

Page 18, lines 49-59- It is not necessary to repeat the results here.

While the results do reflect what is happening in Asia, perhaps more could be done to reflect in the difference in flavor of studies rather than stating the reasons why Asia could be different. This could be aided by looking at types of exercise intervention, and why multifactorial interventions were not effective.

Table 2 divides the studies into types of intervention, but does not stipulate whether the interventions were used for primary or secondary prevention of falls.

**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

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

Acceptable
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