Author’s response to reviews

Title: Depressive Symptoms in Long Term Care Facilities in Western Canada: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Version: 2 Date: 18 Sep 2019

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Dear Editors and Reviewers,

Thank you for these further revisions we have made the following additions as below.
Review

1. Line 69-70. Please consider re-write the sentence "given that in Canada…depression is an important morbidity". The logic is not so clear.

We have rephrased this sentence to “Residents in LTC commonly experience dementia, given this understanding depression as a comorbidity is important. (6)” Page 3 Line 69

2. Line 71. The discussion about whether tools are available seems irrelevant.

We have rephrased this sentence to enhanced its meaning “There are available tools to detect depression in LTC residents (7, 8); however, use of these tools is limited due to numerous barriers contributing to challenges in detection (9)”

3. Line 74. What does "this review" refer to?

We have rephrased this sentence to “However few studies that examine psychological, environmental factors(14).”

4. It is not appropriate to suggest that "no studies within the Canadian context" examined the prevalence of depression as the reference being cited focused only on "anxiety and depressive disorders after traumatic brain injury". Please do a more careful search on Canadian studies related to depression in LTC.
The reference for this sentence is #15 which is: Seitz D, Purandare N, Conn D. Prevalence of psychiatric disorders among older adults in long-term care homes: a systematic review. Int Psychogeriatr. 2010;22(7):1025-39.

This study examines psychiatric disorders in adults in LTC and does not focus on persons with traumatic brain injury. Table 3 refers to depressive disorders in persons in LTC, none of the included studies are focused in Canada. The use of this reference was to highlight that a rigorous systematic review examining behaviors in persons in LTC did not identify studies in Canada. We subsequently discuss the CIHI report and how it reports on depression in LTC in the Canadian context. Given this we have not edited this sentence further.

5. Line 85. "affects" instead of "effects"
On line 91 we have corrected the issue.

6. Report published by CIHI is a very important point of reference in the Canadian context. It would be helpful to provide some background of CIHI's data collection and reporting mechanism. The strengths and limitations, etc.

We have added the following sentence: “We were able to identify a Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) report on depression in LTC, however this was focused only on Ontario, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Yukon(3). This CIHI report focuses on depressive symptoms as measured by the Depression Rating Scale collected on the interRAI Resident Assessment Instrument Minimum Data Set, Version 2.0 from the Continuing Care Reporting
They demonstrated that depressive symptoms were present in 44% of participants, with 26% having a depression diagnosis (n=49,089). More evidence is needed examining the prevalence of depression in LTC in the western Canadian provinces.”

7. Covariates included in this study are listed in Table 1. Although detailed justification are provided, it is still important to discuss the overall conceptual framework. What are the overarching domains being considered (e.g., frailty, comorbidity, etc)? I think a short paragraph need to be dedicated to introduce why these covariates are chosen from many items. For example, in the discussion (Line 255), the authors mentioned that 'unstable medical conditions' are relevant. But relevant items are not examined in this current study.

We have a detailed explanation in the table of the covariates. We added to our methods here: “These covariates were chosen, as they are relevant conditions that are linked to depression in prior studies. We chose to focus on comorbidities in these individuals as they are clearly defined in the databases and rigorously collected.”

Page 6, Line 159

8. Line 146, "out goal…" should be moved to the introduction part.

This was specific to the outcome being discussed, as such we feel this should remain in the methods. We have edited to clarify this.

“This was to see what medications those with depressive symptoms were prescribed” Page 6 Line 165