Reviewer’s report

Title: German general practitioners' self-reported management of patients with chronic depression

Version: 1 Date: 13 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Elizabeth Barley

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for inviting me to review this paper which highlights lack of research evidence and guidance around how to manage this population. I offer some comments for consideration:

Main comments

Objectives:

The first objective surprised me as I had not been led to expect this from reading the background. The rationale for this being the main objective could be strengthened. I would also use a different term than 'non-chronic' depression as this is not accepted terminology and may therefore be confusing.

Re the further objectives: I think it is important to emphasise that it is the GPs' perceived associations that you are trying to understand.

Methods

It would be useful to understand what proportion of the total number of GPs were approached.

Explain how the participants were selected 'randomly' and why this was the best method. It could be argued that purposive sampling would have ensured a wide range of participants was selected.

Questionnaire- since the findings of this study are directly dependent on the content of the questionnaire, it is essential for the reader to be provided with more detail concerning how the content was developed including what sources were used and how items were selected.

It is stated that "The central question was if GPs differentiate between chronic and non-chronic depression" - was this asked directly or inferred from responses, if the latter how? We're definitions of 'chronic' and 'non-chronic' provided? If so what were they, and might they have influenced the GPs' responses?
Results

5 line 111 was the exclusion criteria for amount of missing data decided in advance? If so, what was it? As items were not summed, why could you not use the responses that were provided?

5 line 117 'reported a rather early referral ' how was this judgement made?

When reporting results it is important to emphasise that the findings related to the self-reported behaviours of this sample of GPs i.e. there are no objective measurements to support their assertions

Table 2 is a little confusing - for instance without referring to the text, it is hard to understand how each factor might impact on each decision

Discussion

P8 line 178-180 - it would be helpful to expand on this referenced comment.

Otherwise the discussion and conclusions appear in line with the findings.

Minor comments by page:

3 line 47 Reword 'Factors requesting a long term'

3 line 55 add 'such' after 'factors'

5 line 95 'Logical missings were defined in advance'. - this is unclear

5 line 96 add heading 'data analysis '

7 line 149 'differentiates' should be 'differentiated'

7 line 176 spell out/define NDMG

8 line 181 - this sentence is unclear

9 line 230-232- this sentence is unclear

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

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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