Reviewer’s report

Title: Lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation among men who have sex with men: a meta-analysis

Version: 1  Date: 09 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Travis Salway Hottes

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have addressed most of my comments and concerns with the first version of the manuscript reviewed. In particular, they have done a commendable job expanding their search strategy to include texts that were previously missing.

I have a few additional comments that have arisen with this revised manuscript.

Major comments:

1. Results, page 9: Thank you for adding the supplemental file with the AHRQ scale. It seems to me that this scale is mostly assessing whether or not authors reported variously methodological issues, rather than whether the methods were appropriate. I would suggest the authors explain that their scale assesses quality of reporting but not quality of methods. See the following paper for a discussion of the distinction between these two types of tools: https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/36/3/666/653571

2. Related, it is noteworthy that none of the studies included were of high quality, based on the AHRQ scale. This suggests to me that either: this body of literature is generally of low (reporting) quality, or this scale is not a good fit for the types of research questions these studies are trying to answer. I would appreciate hearing the authors' thoughts on why the quality is generally so low, and I would encourage the authors to discuss this finding in the interpretation of their results.

3. Discussion, page 15: I would caution the authors against making too definite an interpretation of the comparison between their pooled prevalence of lifetime suicide ideation among MSM and the individual estimates from studies of lesbians. The appropriate comparator would be a meta-analysis of suicide ideation among lesbian women. It is not clear to me whether the de Graaf and Steele studies alone are close to the total pooled prevalence that would be derived from a meta-analysis similar to the one presented here for MSM.

Minor comments:
4. In the revised manuscript, the statement "A great disparity was observed..." is unclear. The authors should clarify the nature of this disparity, i.e., "a disparity of higher rates of suicide ideation in MSM as compared with heterosexual men."

5. Background, lines 38-39: I would suggest a bit more cautious language, given that the quantification of MSM suicide deaths is not based on direct estimation. Perhaps: "more MSM are estimated to have died from suicide..."?

6. Background: Some statements are worded in the past-tense but would be more accurate/sensible in present tense (e.g., lines 45-47: ".. the risk of suicide was [is?] significantly higher.." and ".. MSM were [are?] at higher risk...").

7. Methods, line 87: By "subheadings" do the authors mean "subject headings" or indexed search terms?

**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

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

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