Reviewer’s report

Title: Testing decision-making competency of schizophrenia participants in clinical trials. A meta-analysis and meta-regression

Version: 0 Date: 08 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Amri Sabharwal

Reviewer’s report:

Abstract

* A brief overview of the existing literature about decision-making capacity in schizophrenia would be helpful in providing the reader some background on the need for such a study and the gap in literature that is being addressed.

* The first mention of MacCAT-CR should include the full form of the instrument.

* p-value for the understanding dimension is missing.

Introduction

* The introduction, overall, needs a more thorough review of literature.

* No justification has been made in the introduction for the secondary objectives of the study. What are the existing findings regarding the association between enhanced informed consent and DMC in schizophrenia? Have other studies found an association between DMC and any of the demographic factors the authors are interested in?

* Also, why is it important to study the dimensions of MacCAT-CR separately? Have any other studies done that before? What have they found?

Methods & Results

* I’m not sure if the initials of specific authors are required in the methods. The sentences with author initials can be reworded.

* Although not included as a specific aim of the study, it would be helpful to know if the MacCAT-CR scores in the selected studies show an association with positive, negative, or disorganized symptoms, as well as with any neuropsychological/cognitive measures and antipsychotic medication usage. It would be interesting to see if differences in DMC are related to cognitive functioning or severity of psychopathology.
Discussion

* Since one of the primary conclusions of the authors from their work is that despite the significant difference between patients and controls in the dimension scores of MacCAT-CR, individuals with schizophrenia can be considered as being capable of making informed decision in clinical trials, a more formal statistical analysis should be included in the methods/results sections. In the discussion, the authors merely show how the mean score for the patients can be seen as being above threshold on one of the dimensions.

* As the authors note themselves, the number of studies included in the analyses is small. The authors argue that including more studies would make the results more heterogeneous, but I'm not sure if that justifies the small number - perhaps it is important to explain the heterogeneity in the findings.

* The manuscript would be much stronger if more effort was made to explicitly delineate the existing gap in literature and the important way in which this study fills that gap - it would help the reader to understand why this research is meaningful.

Overall

* The manuscript would benefit from another round of editing for grammar and language.

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.

No

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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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