Author’s response to reviews

Title: The power of support from companion animals for people living with mental health problems: A systematic review and narrative synthesis of the evidence

Authors:

Helen Brooks (helen.brooks@liverpool.ac.uk)
Kelly Rushton (kelly.rushton@manchester.ac.uk)
Karina Lovell (karina.lovell@manchester.ac.uk)
Penny Bee (penny.bee@manchester.ac.uk)
Lauren Walker (lauren.walker-2@manchester.ac.uk)
Laura Grant (laura.grant-4@student.manchester.ac.uk)
Anne Rogers (a.e.rogers@soton.ac.uk)

Version: 2 Date: 03 Jan 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Department of Psychological Sciences
Institute of Psychology, Health and Society
University of Liverpool
Liverpool

Sharon Lawn
BMC Psychiatry

Wednesday, 3 January 2018
Dear Sharon,

RE: The power of pet support for people living with a mental health problem: A systematic review and narrative synthesis of the evidence

Thank you for your email dated the 3rd of January 2018, for the helpful set of reviewers’ comments and the requested minor revisions. We have now revised the manuscript in line with the comments from the reviewers, which we feel has strengthened the manuscript. Please find below a point-by-point response to each point raised by the reviewers. Revisions are evident within the manuscript through the use of tracked changes and highlights as requested.

Editor Comments:

Reviewer 2:

Ines Testoni (Reviewer 2):

The article is quite interesting and the analysis is appropriate. Unfortunately the text is very messy, because of all the visible corrections (track changes) and the comments to the reviewers. However, I think that the text should be right.

Thank you for your comments.

Harmony Rhoades (Reviewer 3)

This is an important and well-written paper that outlines meaningful and useful findings from existing literature on pets and mental health. The methods are rigorous. I have only a few minor edits and comments for improving the overall manuscript.

Thank you for your comments.

General: there seem to be many missing commas throughout. Some of this may be a stylistic choice, but oftentimes commas were also missing from necessary locations, such as lists.

We have been through the manuscript and ensured commas have been added to all necessary locations such as lists.
Background:

Line 125: I think this should be providing "companionship" not "companionships."

The text has now been revised and “companionships” has now been replaced with “companionship” as suggested by reviewer 3.

Theoretical framework: While interesting, I think the theoretical framework piece needs to be more directly tied to the current manuscript. As it stands now, I'm not sure how this theoretical framework is useful in this context nor how it is being applied, specifically, to this review.

We refer reviewer 3 to the data synthesis section of the manuscript for detail on how the framework was specifically applied in this review. We now refer the readers directly to this section in the theoretical framework section for clarity purposes. We have also added two additional sentences to the theoretical framework section to clarify why the illness work framework is useful in this context and how it was used for purposes of this review.

Methods:

Line 180: "Table 1" should be capitalized in-text.

All instances of ‘table’ have been capitalized in-text.

Lines 204: Numbering needs commas. Also, should it be "participant's" or "participants'" perspectives?

We have added commas to the numbering and replaced participants with participants’.

Line 214: I think "components" should be "component."

‘Components’ has now been replaced with ‘component’.

Lines 228-233: How were exclusion/inclusion conflicts resolved?

Full texts were screened for inclusion independently by two reviewers and inclusion/exclusion conflicts were resolved by a third reviewer. This is included in the text - see 211-212.
Were additional articles identified by referring to reference lists? (I can see in the figure that they were; should probably be mentioned in-text).

The reference lists of included papers were also manually searched for relevant papers. This is included in the text - see lines 216-217

Line 435: "effected" should be "affected."

Effected has been replaced with affected as suggested by reviewer 3.

Line 442: "Pets" should be "Pets'" (with an apostrophe).

“Pets” has been replaced with “pets”

Line 696: "Nourishment" is misspelled.

This has now been corrected in the text.

I hope these revisions meet with your approval and I would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful contributions to the article. Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Brooks
Lecturer