Reviewer’s report

Title: Effects of dog-assisted therapy in adults with dementia: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 0 Date: 14 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Sverre Bergh

Reviewer's report:

Thanks for the opportunity to read your manuscript and critical review the text.

DAT is popular in nursing homes and other places of care for persons with dementia, and both theoretical and based on clinical experience it seems as a good idea for treating different symptoms of dementia. On the other side, it may have some side-effects, and its effect should be critical reviewed. I therefore appreciate your effort to present a metanalysis of the effect of DAT.

I enjoyed the manuscript. It is well written, easy to follow, and generally of good quality. Nevertheless, I have some comments for the authors, that I hope they can address:

1. I would like if you could include some information about publication bias. Have you been searching ClinicalTrials.gov and other databases for planned RCT on DAT that have not been publishing?
2. There are other international databases for research papers as Embase, PsycINFO, CINAHL, AgeLine, and PROSPERO. Did you think about including some of these databases in your search? It is not sure that expanding the databases searched in would increase the number of papers, but any thoughts about why you only searched PubMed, scopus and CENTRAL?
3. Figure 1. Flow chart. I am a bit confused about the numbers. You assessed 37 full text papers, of whom 27 were excluded for different reasons. That should leave you with 10 papers, before you added two papers that cited the papers identified in step one. Please clarify.

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:

Acceptable

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