Reviewer’s report

Title: How do community-based eye care practitioners approach depression in patients with low vision? A mixed methods study

Version: 0 Date: 31 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Suzanne Cosh

Reviewer's report:

This paper explores an important area and has the potential to make a valuable contribution. However, there are a number of revisions required prior to being ready for publication.

The introduction focuses a little too narrowly on the clinic at hand and would benefit from greater engagement and location of the problem in the broader literature. For example, the introduction should expand slightly on depression in low vision and vision loss, especially to outline risk of depression onset and/or prevalence of comorbid depression. The depression in VI literature is not engaged with in enough depth.

Likewise, reasons for low detection and treatment of depression in this population in practice should be explored more, especially given the low detection of depression in older adults generally.

Locating routine depression screening including benefits and costs within the broader chronic health literature on depression screening in practice is also needed.

The rationale for the paper will be strengthened once the study is better located within the extant literature. It will also better suit the wide readership of the journal.

The research questions need to be reworked with some rationale provided around use of mixed methods, and how these questions sit within current knowledge gaps.

Method needs to explicitly state what training/background is of practitioners.
Given that the questionnaire did not use previously validated measures, more details including on development should be provided. The testing and refining process also needs to be expanded upon.
There is reference to psychometric assessment of the questionnaire but the psychometrics including validity and reliability are not reported.

The measures and procedures are quite interwoven - the methods would be clearer if these sections were more clearly delineated.

It is unclear in the statistical analysis section how the audit data will be used. How risk of depression is determined needs to be made more explicit.

For the qualitative section - again please separate information regarding the interview and the procedure. An overall procedure section would make the methods clearer. The term measures can be replaced when overviewing the interviews. This section needs more information regarding the focus of the interviews, what sorts of questions were asked, how they were developed and what information was aiming to be gained.

Given the purposive sampling for the interviews, more details are needed regarding how/why this sample was selected and a stronger rationale for this is needed.

Who was the interviewer and was there any relationship with the practitioners? Ethical issues around clinical lead recruitment clinicians need to be better addressed. Notably, there is no mention of ethics in the paper.

More details of the exact type of thematic analysis undertaken are needed (eg Epistemological position? Etc). The qualitative analysis section needs more depth and clarity. How was NVivo
incorporated and at what stage, how were higher order themes determined, how was this integrated with reflective journals and field notes?

The presentation of the results section could be clearer - consider revising the subheadings to be more concise and focused.
Provide specific results regarding Q2 - it is stated that practitioners had low confidence, but not actual numbers or findings are reported. At least some basic results need to be reported in text or the main paper in a table and not only as supplementary material. The same applies to the barriers information.
The mixture of assessment types is introduced for the first time in the results and needs to be covered in the method.
Also report the model statistics for the regression models, and report adjusted r-squares for regressions.
The thematic analysis would benefit from more engagement with the questions asked and how these shape responses. Some of the sections were a little brief and as such the claims do not appear fully supported. Outlining subthemes, especially in theme three might be useful. The quantitative results section could probably be more condensed and presented with more tables, leaving more space for the qualitative analysis.
It is odd to intersperse the thematic analysis with research question subheadings - this does not fully fit with the presentation of an inductive analysis and the presentation of this section should be reworked and better integrated into the themes presented.
The training needs do not flow well and would be better placed in the discussion. Likewise impressions on reasons for confidence etc are better placed in the discussion not the results section as these are speculative interpretations rather than findings.

The mixed methods results are not introduced or discussed and only presented in a table - some in text outlining would be beneficial.

The discussion needs to be notably reworked.
The first paragraph of the discussion should highlight key findings and provide a stronger summary.
The discussion focuses too much on differences between survey and interview and is very speculative and appears to introduce new information. Focus more on interpreting the results and locating them within the broader literature. There are very few references in the discussion and much literature that is not engaged with.
This paper has scope to really provide clear implications for practice and but currently does not do this enough. Broader use of routine depression screening in other health care contexts should also be engaged with when making recommendations.
Also consider that some ORs were very close to 1 and some CIs very wide and this needs to be noted in the discussion of those results.

**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.

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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