Reviewer's report

Title: Loneliness and social isolation interventions for older adults: a scoping review of reviews

Version: 1 Date: 23 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Jessie Hu

Reviewer's report:

Great job on the changes you have made, it is much improved and a clearer read! Well done also on justifying undertaking a scoping review/benefits of performing a scoping review for your topic, and great job explaining why only certain information was extracted from specific included review papers. Please find some specific and some general comments and suggestions below:

MINOR

- Clarity with wording needed regarding mode as an intervention characteristic - group/one-to-one as one option, technology/non-technology as another option - and used in different included review papers?

- Conclusion of abstract discusses loneliness interventions and its limitations/individuality - what about conclusions regarding social isolation?

- High- and low-income countries were specified - is this particular information relevant to the research in this publication (as opposed to middle-income?); perhaps consider whether just a global context may be what is being referred to here - page 2 (line 19)

- A number of sentences need restructuring to better convey the meaning, for example page 2 (line 20-21) - do you mean smoking, lack of exercise…etc. are each a risk factor for morbidity/mortality?

- "Greater geographical mobility" was listed as a risk factor for loneliness/social isolation in older adults - please clarify - page 3 (line 5-6)

- Consider defining social isolation and loneliness before giving the statistics and risk factors for them

- In general, please check grammar and punctuation, and take care with the order, structure and format of the piece

- Please elaborate on/describe instead of only listing some of the examples you provide, for example for the systematic reviews in the current literature - page 5 (line 12-13)
• May be useful to demonstrate why it was necessary to conduct preliminary searches before the actual search, and how this was conducted

• Search of grey literature - was this Google Scholar?

• Page 8 (line 17-18) - are the reasons for exclusion highlighted or listed somewhere?

• Please be consistent with the use of numbers in the results section when listing the number of reviews included/excluded at each stage in-text just for the ease of the reader - general suggestion, perhaps spell out the number if ten and under, and use the numerical value if greater than ten

• Take care in bringing in the term 'physical social isolation' without have defined what that means earlier and how it differs from social isolation alone/how it differs from the definition of social isolation previously given

• Reclarify the message that you are trying to get across regarding age range - page 13 (line 4-5)

• May be beneficial to specify earlier that the reviews included in this paper didn't always specify age ranges (because if not, it would have been beneficial to incorporate age range as part of the data extraction in the outset)

• If 'Men's Shed' is not commonly/widely/globally known, it may be worthwhile very briefly explaining what this is when it is first mentioned - page 14 (line 17)

• Consider discussing why there was a female skew in the discussion section/linking it to your aims in the discussion

• In the results, there is a lot of listing of XYZ included review authors having a specific feature/characteristic/categorisation in their review - consider whether it may be clearer to have this listed in a larger table to better provide a comparison and simultaneously demonstrate other characteristics - for example when categorising country/countries

• Take care in saying "in the remaining review" as it can at times come across as the remaining review out of all the included reviews - whereas to my current understanding, I believe you are referring to the remaining review of the X number that you listed for a specific section in the results e.g. remaining out of 6 on technology-based interventions

• Instead of saying that that an included review paper was similar to another review paper in a general feature, it would be helpful to remind the readers in what way they were similar i.e. what the paper you are comparing it to did that was similar to the paper you are now talking about - for example page 19 (line 12-14)

• Clarity from the beginning on what you are referring to when you say "constructs" would be helpful
• Please highlight/give examples of what interacting components making social isolation/loneliness interventions complex

• Please clarify what is meant by the "difficulty of behaviours" - page 23 (line 12)

• There is mention of different types of loneliness in the discussion - what are these?

• Really nice conclusion in terms of the future directions, implications and recommendations - an additional brief line about the findings of your scoping review after the first sentence would be helpful to make a clear summary and really highlight the main message

MAJOR

• Please give a clear definition for loneliness like you did for social isolation, and demonstrate how the two differ (in the background section)

• Still have some concerns regarding the limited range of words used in the search strategy e.g. use of truncations as a boolean search modifier

• Please make a note of clearly distinguishing between review authors (yourselves) vs. review authors (the authors of the reviews that were included in this paper) - especially in the abstract since this really sets the scene, and when explaining that loneliness/social isolation are different but used interchangeably (additional note: some of my comments have pertained to needing clarification/justification for certain things which in retrospect having distinguished the scoping review authors (you) vs. included review paper authors - these comments are in reference to justifying your own decisions in the scoping review (not the decisions of other authors)

Overall, great job! I really liked the relevance and reference to policy in the discussion. It was also really great that you highlighted the heterogenous nature of interventions, and individual experiences of loneliness. Well done!

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.

Unable to assess

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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