Reviewer’s report

Title: Are the MoreCare Guidelines on reporting of attrition in palliative care research useful to evaluate the statistical appropriateness of a study? A systematic review and meta analysis of randomised controlled trials in palliative care.

Version: 0 Date: 24 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Victoria Vickerstaff

Reviewer's report:

The study investigated whether the MORECare taxonomy on reporting attrition in trials can be retrospectively applied to data retrieved from a systematic review on attrition in palliative care.

I suggest the following minor changes are made prior to accepting this paper.

1. I don't think the paper title reflects the contents of the paper. I think it is too strong to say that you are looking at the 'statistical appropriateness' of studies. Please could this be amended.

2. In the background, it states that "in palliative care populations, missing data could mostly be classified as MNAR". I feel that this is too strongly worded - prior to performing this study is this known?

3. One of the inclusion criteria was studies that were 'palliative care'. What definition of palliative care was used?

4. Typos: change 'stathistical methods' to 'statistical methods'

5. The study population was patients with incurable disease or life threatening disease. Some patients can live for years with incurable diseases. Was the expected survival of the participants examined? Did patients need to have an expected survival of less than a year (say)? Following from this, I would be interesting in seeing if there a correlation between the length of survival of patients and the time of the primary endpoint.

6. The section on imputation methods - were these imputation methods used for the primary outcome? Or for the secondary outcomes? The authors don't make it clear what their view point is on imputation of missing data for primary outcomes is.

7. Typo on page 6 - "most patients had cancer (76%) with 20% having a non-cancer (20%) condition". Delete the repeated "20%". Also - what were the other 4% of papers?
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.
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Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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