Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient benefit of dog-assisted interventions in health care: A systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 05 May 2017

Reviewer: Yogendra Nayak

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Editor,

The manuscript entitled "Patient benefit of dog-assisted interventions in health care: A systematic review" (Manuscript Number:BCAM-D-17-00411) can be accepted with few modification.

This review is novel in alternative methods of disease treatment. In fact few research publication will exist in the literature. This manuscript will support most of the practitioners at nursing home or in clinical setup. The study reported looks very simple but surely require lot of accuracy and insight. For example, they might have to take approval from both human ethic committee and animal ethics committee for study protocol approval. Few points the authors have to answer before finalising the manuscript for publication.

1. As the study conducted from the databases, keywords play important role for someone to cross verify and to perform the study in future. I feel certain level of inclusion in the main text about search criteria is necessary. This will answer how a huge number of articles are excluded from the study. Otherwise it looks biased. To say the authors have selected few articles to prove their hypothesis rather than investigating the real hidden truth.

2. The discussion it infers/ or it might misleads that in control group there was no treatment for the disease. This has to be clarified in discussion. Because along with the DAT or DAA or for that matter DAS, whether treatment for the actual disease is given or not? If the treatment is not given how ethical is the study?

3. In the inclusion criteria why 20 subject was mentioned? Why not 19? Is it decided after collection of data or before the literature search from the databases? Similarly for other criteria for inclusion. If this is not answered then it looks more biased. It implies that the conclusion made prior to arrival of results.

4. Another important statement given is many number of articles are excluded based on poor quality. What are these poor quality, how it was decided? it should be included in the main article than the supplement.

5. How the effect was decided mild to moderate in all the articles studied? What are the criteria for these mild to moderate effects?
6. References cited wrongly for many. It should be cross checked and rectified.

7. Apart from all these the language has to be cross checked with experts. I feel at places it require some modification, few examples of the sentences, page number 10 "Three of the included studies studied patients in child and adolescent psychiatry [21, 22, 24]." Page number 9 '

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

'I declare that I have no competing interests'

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.