Reviewer’s report

Title: Defining the gap: A systematic review of the difference in rates of diabetes-related foot complications in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non Indigenous Australians

Version: 1 Date: 31 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Elizabeth Barr

Reviewer's report:

I would like to thank the authors for taking the time to revise their manuscript. Overall, the paper is now improved. However, I think some further refinement is required.

1. The paper includes results on prevalence, incidence, odds ratios (OR) and relative risk (RR), but this is inconsistent with the stated aim which is to report on prevalence of diabetic foot complications in Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Prevalence and incidence are absolute measures used to describe the numbers of people with the disease or developing the disease, and OR and RR are measures describing associations between risk factors and disease. In this paper the risk factor is Indigenous status. Prevalence and OR are derived from cross-sectional studies, and incidence and RR are derived from longitudinal studies.

Perhaps the aims could be expanded to include both absolute and relative measures, and the results and tables divided accordingly. Hence, the first section discusses the prevalence of foot complications in Indigenous Australians (here the number of papers included could be increased to also include those that report prevalence only in Indigenous Australians), and the second section discuss Indigenous status as a risk factor for foot complications (i.e. reporting OR for cross-sectional and RR from longitudinal studies). The second section needs to be restricted to studies with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Thus, the conclusions will report on (i) the prevalence of foot complications for Indigenous Australians (eg. XX% to XX%) to give results on how many Indigenous people with diabetes have or develop foot complications, and (ii) the extent to which Indigenous status compared to non-Indigenous status was associated with foot complications (eg. report OR or RR).

2. Suggest the authors use a references program like EndNote or Reference Manager to ensure the references are formatted appropriately. It is usual to provide volume, issue and page numbers rather than a web-site address.

3. References 3 and 5 are outdated, and reference 5 only relates to Insulin Dependent Diabetes. The correct references are: "Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015. The health and welfare of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 2015. Cat. no. IHW 147. Canberra: AIHW" and "4727.0.55.003 - Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: Biomedical Results, 2012-13" and/or refs 10 and 11 as already referred to in
the paper. Also the sentence in the Background, first paragraph that begins: "....This same report found diabetes accounted for 16% ....." should also be updated with the more recent data from these references. It may also be useful to report hospitalisation data for Indigenous relative to non-Indigenous as this would help to demonstrate the greater morbidity experienced by Indigenous Australians.

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