Reviewer’s report

Title: The Association Between Mental Health Nursing and Hospital Admissions For People With Serious Mental Illness: A Protocol For a Systematic Review

Version: 0 Date: 28 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Justin Clark

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well thought out and well designed systematic review that follows well known guidelines and incorporates the best methods for the conduct of a systematic review.

I have noticed some small typos in your manuscript which I have highlighted below. I also have noticed some issues regarding some of the steps you will be taking, primarily with the locating of the studies for your review.

On line 112 you state that you will only include articles published in English, although I am assuming that this is due to a lack of non-English speakers Google translate is becoming more commonly used in systematic reviews and can be a useful tool to attempt to incorporate other languages into a review. I would suggest planning on incorporating as many different languages as possible and only excluding at the end of the process based on language after all other options have been exhausted.

The list of databases is quite extensive, which can be a good thing. But it is not usual to search both Ovid Medline and PubMed. Unless there is a good reason to search both of them you should choose one or the other, as they are both essentially the same content.

The formatting of the strategy itself seems to be an amalgamation of both Ovid Medline and PubMed. For instance [sh] is actually subheading in PubMed, while .sh. is subject heading in Ovid Medline. As an example this is the search on line 97:

i. Mental health nurs$ [tiab] OR psychiatric nursing [sh] OR psychiatric nurs$ [tiab]

In Ovid Medline it should look like this:

i. Mental health nurs$.ti,ab. OR psychiatric nursing.sh. OR psychiatric nurs$.ti,ab.

While in PubMed it should look like this:

"Mental health nurs*"[tiab] OR psychiatric nursing[mh] OR "psychiatric nurs*"[tiab]

Although as the asterisk (wild card) symbol * doesn't work in "quote marks" it should look more like this:

The formatting of the search strategy should be made consistent with one database before it is published.

Most of the content of the search strategy is good, with the exception of line iv starting on line 108. Limiting to publication type only can mean missing some studies and the authors should think about using standardised filters to limit their search to observational studies and trials. A list is maintained here.

https://sites.google.com/a/york.ac.uk/issg-search-filters-resource/home/search-filters-by-design

Or the authors should approach their library and see if there are experienced health librarians there who are willing to help them. The number of health librarians capable of supporting authors conducting a systematic review is growing and I would suggest this as a viable option for the authors.

On line 166 you state that if similar studies are found they will be combined using a random effects model. I would be interested to know why a decision regarding the model would be made in the protocol. Normally people say they will use a fixed effect model unless the studies are too different in which case they will move to the random effects. Even if the authors are very much aware of the literature on this topic I would still think that it would be prudent to not lock yourself into one model or the other in the protocol.

Small typos

Line 10: "Systemically" is probably meant to be "systematically"

Line 29: "at" needs to be inserted between disorder and some

Line 216: "educational" should be "educational"

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