Reviewer’s report

Title: Information needs in people with diabetes mellitus: a systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 27 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Liz Mitchell

Reviewer’s report:

OVERVIEW

This is a systematic review of the information needs of people with diabetes and the factors that influence them.

Background

The authors report that data on information needs from Germany is sparse. I am not sure that this sentence is necessary or adds anything as the review relates to world literature. In addition, the reference given to support this statement is almost 20 years old.

Methods

Search strategy: the search terms listed do not tally with those outlined in the search strategies in the Appendix; some of those listed (such as "knowledge need" and "wish or desire of information") appear as separate terms, while others (such as "quest" and "lack") do not appear in the appendix at all.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: if the aim of the review was to identify the information needs of people with diabetes, why were studies relating to people with a risk of diabetes included? Were studies looking at tools to capture information needs included even if they did not report on actual needs? It is unclear whether this was an inclusion criteria or simply part of the data extraction process.

Critical appraisal: the names/types of the specific appraisal tools used should be provided together with an explanation of the scoring system used (i.e. what ++, + and - relates to in Table 1). In addition, the reference given for the NICE report indicates that the relevant information can be found on page 286, but the report does not have a page 286.

Results

More information should be provided on the results of critical appraisal, such as the issues that were identified (e.g. which checklist criteria were not commonly fulfilled?). This will allow
readers to determine whether this has implications of the conclusions that can be drawn from the individual studies and from the review itself.

Subgroups of information needs: more information should be provided on the studies that investigated an association with IN - study purpose, participants etc. - so that the reader can better understand the associations identified. More information should also be reported for Reference 23, together with the results of comparative statistics if these were used (this currently reads "different diagnoses and diseases are significantly associated with different medicine information needs").

Information needs and age: Did all of the studies in young people focus on and/or include information needs reported by the children themselves or by their parents/carers? It would be useful to clarify this since some of the included children are relatively young and potentially having help with disease management.

Associated factors…: It would be better to summarise the information provided in Table 4 within the text rather than including it as a table. As it currently stands, this section does not convey much information.

Discussion

A large part of the discussion appears to summarise the findings related to unmet need rather than setting the overall results in context.

Figures and Tables

Figure 1: reasons for exclusion should be included in the table rather than as a footnote.

Table 1: it might be more helpful to sort the studies in Table 1 by type of diabetes rather than by outcome and study design. It would also be useful to include the breakdown of male to female participants in each study.

Tables 2 and 3: including a count of the number of studies addressing each category and sub-category rather than reference numbers would make the tables more informative, as would including some indication of the strength of evidence related to each category/sub-category (since only two of 28 studies fulfilled all NICE criteria).

Table 4: This could be excluded and the contents summarised in the text.

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