Reviewer's report

Title: Network meta-analysis of randomised trials of pharmacological, psychotherapeutic, exercise and collaborative care interventions for depressive symptoms in patients with coronary artery disease: hybrid systematic review of systematic reviews protocol

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Reviewer: Qin Xiang Ng

Reviewer's report:

Overall, a competent study plan. However, some important concerns and queries have to be addressed before publication can be advised.

Specific comments:

- Would the scope of this study be too wide and ambitious? "pharmacological, psychotherapeutic, exercise and collaborative care interventions"

- The assessment of the risk of bias and its consideration in the network meta-analysis is significantly more challenging than in conventional meta-analysis. Do you have any strategies in mind to adjust for biases within the included trials?

- Please change "Depression is a common in patients" to "Depression is common in patients".

- Please rephrase "While a substantial body of research exists in terms of depression interventions in those with CAD [4, 6- 11], the effects of both pharmacological and psychological interventions are typically small [6, 8, 12], and may even be smaller than seen in populations without CAD [13], or indeed those with other chronic conditions such as diabetes [14]." The sentence is long, convoluted and confusing.

- What does it mean by "using the recommended to maximum doses of pharmacotherapies, greater than 4 sessions of psychotherapies - these would be considered high intense interventions; otherwise considered as low-intensity"?
- It is unclear if the authors intend to report all pair-wise effect estimates together with the associated confidence or credible intervals. This should be clarified, depending on the statistical model used (i.e., frequentist or Bayesian model).

- For each treatment, one can calculate the probability that the treatment is the best, second best, or third best among all treatments. However, such probability statements should be interpreted carefully since the difference between treatments might be small and not clinically meaningful.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field that should be highlighted to relevant networks

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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