VALIDITY OF SCREENING TOOLS FOR DEMENTIA AMONG ELDERLY AT PRIMARY HEALTHCARE LEVEL: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW PROTOCOL

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Abstract

Purpose: Worldwide, mild cognitive impairment and dementia is a problem among the elderly. Various screening tools have been used at the primary care levels with varying efficacies. This protocol aims to illustrate steps taken for a systematic review towards providing updated and comprehensive evidence on valid screening tools for cognitive impairment among elderly at primary care level.

Methodology: The review will include validity study and other relevant studies aimed to identify validity of screening tools for dementia involving elderly at primary care level. The outcome assessed includes the sensitivity and specificity of the identified screening tools.

Results: Three-part search strategy will be used; electronic bibliographic databases including PubMed, EMBASE and CENTRAL for published studies, grey literature for unpublished works, and reference list of published studies. Attempts will be made to review articles in all languages. The results obtained will be exported to a bibliographic database for screening process. Two review authors will work independently to screen results and will extract data from included studies. The differences in data extraction will be settled by third author. Standardized forms and criteria will be used. A descriptive analysis of the studies will describe study design, participants, and outcomes.

Discussion: The systematic review will provide a robust systematic search in providing evidence-based decision-making for policy makers in deciding the best screening tool to be used for detecting cognitive impairment among elderly at primary care level.

Background

Globally, the estimated prevalence of dementia is around 5 to 7% in most world regions including South East Asia with the highest in Latin America; 8.5%. The number is estimated to be increasing as the world population is aging.¹ It is currently estimated that 35-6 million people are living with dementia worldwide and that number will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050, with the majority living in developing countries.² The prevalence of dementia in Malaysia varied from 14.3% to 52.3% depending on types of tool that being used and urbanization status of the respondents.³,⁴,⁵ Dementia is a broad syndrome from mild to severe of cognitive impairment due to brain illness that significantly causes disability in older peoples.² However, there is difficulty in detecting mild cognitive impairment as most patients presented to the clinician in moderate to severe stage.⁶,⁷ In addition, several barriers related to patients care givers, providers, and health care system have been identified as contributing factors to missed or delayed diagnosis of dementia in primary care setting as discussed in previous study.⁸ Screening of dementia among those who are at risk and early diagnosis are important in the management of disease and ensuring preparedness among the caregivers.⁹,¹⁰