

Review of: "Effectiveness of a novel multi-modal intervention for family caregivers of persons with age-related macular degeneration: a randomised controlled trial"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This study assesses the value of multi-modal intervention for the caregivers of patients with AMD. Although the study did not find significant improvements in its primary outcomes after intervention, the topic is poorly elucidated in the literature and deserves due attention.

— It would be advisable to avoid such contradictory terms as “non-significant improvement”. If absolutely necessary, these could perhaps be replaced by a “non-significant trend towards improvement”.

— Likewise, statements such as “The results of this trial are inconclusive because a clinically meaningful treatment effect cannot be ruled out” appear somewhat misleading. Such phrasing would imply that the effect is there but difficult to discern. What the results plainly show, is that there is no statistically significant difference between the intervention and the non-intervention arm.

— It could be argued that blurring the line between clinically significant and statistically significant effect, as done by this article, could be dangerous. “Clinical significance” is in this case loosely defined, which could welcome almost any kind of interpretation.

— Authors could perhaps take some time to discuss the viability of the chosen multimodal approach in the light of a) that it takes 10-12 CBT sessions to get a lasting effect, as the article quotes; and b) the dropout rate of the far less extensive intervention in their study.

— A large part part of the discussion is spent on the meaning of statistical and clinical significance. It could be argued that this is not necessary as the reader will be likely familiar with the concepts.