**Additional file 4**. Characteristics of excluded studies (ordered by study ID)

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| **Study ID** | **Reason for exclusion** |
| Chan et al. (2016) | Wrong design - not an RCT.  |
| Chen et al. (2011) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Hedayati et al. (2016) | Wrong design –a primary study (RCT) protocol |
| Hou et al. (2014) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Hudson et al. (2016) | Wrong design - not an RCT, a self-management protocol |
| Kusztal et al. (2010) | Wrong design - not an RCT, a report only. |
| Lii et al. (2007) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Marvi et al. (2011) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Mehrtak et al. (2017) | Wrong design and population-not an RCT, HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Sharp et al. (2005) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Sohn et al. (2016) | Wrong design - not an RCT.  |
| Solati et al. (2019) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |
| Tsay et al. (2005) | Wrong population-HD patients without diagnosed depressive symptoms |