FCBH Research Centre,
School of Human Sciences,
University of Surrey,
GU2 7XH

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BMC Health Services Research Journal

Dear Editors,

Please find enclosed the authors' response to the reviewers comments for the manuscript entitled 'The Internet for weight control in an obese sample: results of a randomised controlled trial'.

The authors agree with the reviewer that labelling the primary analysis as ITT may be misleading as a large drop out of participants means the perfect ITT analysis was not possible. The analysis on all available data, even if the participant no longer used the intervention, offers the closest alternative to ITT. However the authors agree it is best to change the label of this analysis to avoid confusion with the ideal situation hoped for (i.e. perfect response rate). Following from the reviewers comments the authors have removed the text "Intention to Treat" from the manuscript and replaced this text with "analysis based on all available data".

The authors do not think it is appropriate to label this analysis as "per protocol" as this suggests that all participants used the intervention with the requested frequency set out in the protocol which wasn't the case in this study. In this study every attempt was made to follow participants up regardless of compliance with the intervention which would not have happened in a per protocol analysis.

Although the reviewer suggests that the "secondary analyses" (LOCF and BOCF) represent an ITT analysis the authors don't feel this is the case because although everyone is included in these analyses, it's not their actual correct measure, so it would be misleading to call this the ITT analysis. These analyses are subject to possible bias because people who were lost to follow-up will have an earlier measurement assigned to them. The authors would prefer not to use LOCF and BOCF as the primary analyses as these methods make strong assumptions about the data that may not be valid and at best should only be used for sensitivity analysis.

The authors have made the changes outlined in the table below, removing reference to "ITT" and replacing this with "analysis based on all available data" which more accurately describes the analysis.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further comments.
Yours Sincerely,

Aine McConnon, PhD.

Table of amendments made:

Abstract: Results: pg 2 line 2.	Based on intention to treat analysis (ITT), the Internet group lost…	Based on analysis conducted on all available data, the Internet group lost…
Methods: Statistical Analyses: pg 8 Line 6	Primary analyses were conducted based on the intention to treat principle (ITT) where all available data were used.	Primary analyses were conducted based on all available data.
Results: Sensitivity Analyses: pg 10 line 1	To assess the robustness of the primary ITT analysis	To assess the robustness of the primary analysis …
Results: Sensitivity Analyses: pg 10 line 2	…12 month weight data: ITT, LOCF, BOCF and hypothesised 'best case' and 'worst case' scenario…	….12 month weight data: all available data, LOCF, BOCF and hypothesised 'best case' and 'worst case' scenario….
	1st pargraph, page 14: Remove "REF" after Reference 29.	Removed.