Author's response to reviews

Title: Effects of Self-Management Intervention on Health Outcomes of Patients with Heart Failure: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials

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Version: 5 Date: 13 October 2006

Author's response to reviews: see over
Thank you very much for reviewing the latest revision of our manuscript. We have carefully considered the reviewer’s comments and have revised our manuscript accordingly. The changes to the manuscript and our responses to the reviewer are outlined below:

1. The reviewer recommended that we provide statistics on our agreement to include/exclude the studies retrieved in the search of literature from the systematic review. In the revised manuscript, we have provided these statistics on page 8. We agree that the inclusion of this statistics strengthens the quality of the review.

2. The reviewer suggested that we acknowledge the difficulty of knowing to what extent self-management, as opposed to other aspects of the intervention, was responsible for the effect on patients’ health. We do acknowledge this issue in our manuscript. More specifically, in the Discussion section (pages 13-14), we note:
   “The studies also involved different degree of contact with medical staff. It is difficult to assess from the available data to what degree, if any, communication frequency during follow up affected the primary outcomes, because the studies that involved more frequent follow up also involved more education. Moreover, it is not clear to whether the follow-up by medical professionals affected patients’ health status. Although we excluded the studies in which doctors or nurses assessed patients’ health or altered their health regimen, it is possible that contact with medical professionals influenced patients’ health outcomes. Further research is needed to conclusively determine the effects of the quantity of self-management education, the method of delivery, and the duration and nature of follow up on health outcomes.”

3. The reviewer recommended that we include a comment on the other relevant reviews, such as telemonitoring, in the Discussion section. In this version of the manuscript, on pages 14-15, we have included a note on the telemonitoring interventions in the section discussing related systematic reviews.

Thank you for reviewing our manuscript and for your response.

Sincerely,