Reviewer’s report

Title: Successful Reach and Adoption of a workplace health promotion intervention study targeting a group of high-risk workers: A randomized controlled trial among cleaners

Version: 1 Date: 19 February 2010

Reviewer: Karin Proper

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General comment

This is an interesting study and gives insight into the characteristics of consenters and participants versus those not consenting and not participating in a study to the effectiveness of a workplace health promotion program. I do however a few questions and comments to the methods applied.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Considering the aim of the trial, in the analyses, I do miss data on work ability and sick leave. Wasn’t it possible to retrieve information on those variables. For sick leave, one may use company’s registrations.

2. The eligibility criterion for companies, ie being able to give employees the opportunity to participate in working hours, probably leads to exclusion of a specific group/type of companies. Data are mainly provided at the company level, ie private versus public companies. However, it would be more interesting to get insight into differences in workforce characteristics, such as the distribution of gender, age, prevalence/mean duration of sick leave, MSD, etcetera.

3. The authors have determined the differences between diverse groups using unadjusted analyses. However, I would recommend to perform adjusted (regression) analyses as well in order to adjust for some variables.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the introduction and discussion, the authors refer to the external validity of studies giving the impression that the present study provides insight in the external validity. However, as some information about the non-participating, but eligible companies has been given, the data are not sufficient to draw a conclusion about the external validity. In my opinion, more information about the workforce characteristics, reasons for non-participating etc should be available. So, the results are interesting, but a conclusion about external validity goes a bridge too far.

2. In the introduction and discussion, it may be good to refer to a recent publication of Groeneveld et al. (IJBNPA, 2009;6:80). They investigated the factors associated with participation and drop-out in a trial to the effectiveness of a workplace health (lifestyle) promotion program. Results were partly similar in
that participants had a less favourable health profile than non-participants. I recommend to compare the results of the present study with those of Groeneveld et al., and taken together these findings, what can be learnt from these findings for future trials.

3. On page 5, target population: "therefore…." I don't understand the reasoning.

4. Page 5. I don't understand the relevance of the description of the inhabitants of Denmark in relation to the power calculation. What was the expected relevant effect size and standard deviation? And what was the main outcome?

5. What were the references of most of the questions used?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.