Author's response to reviews

Title: A randomised controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of offering study results as an incentive to increase response rates to postal questionnaires [ISRCTN26118436]

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Author's response to reviews:

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8th July 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: "A randomised controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of offering study results as an incentive to increase response rates to postal questionnaires."

Thank you for e-mail dated 20th June 2005 including the referee's comments for the above paper. We would have no objections to it being published in BMC Medical Research Methodology and as requested have included the trial registration number.

We resubmit a revised version of our paper and have responded to the referees' comments as follows.

Reviewer #1

Major compulsory Revisions

1. Background:

We have included a section on the relevance of the results of the study as suggested.

2. Methods study population:

We have included an additional table 4 to provide information on responders/non-responders and added an additional sentence relating to this in the discussion paragraph.

3. Methods:

We have clarified when the reminder questionnaires were sent out.

4. Outcomes

We have included in the results section information about the total number of reminders sent out, however, no additional information was collected.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the abstract (methods) the second sentence has been simplified to "the main outcome measure was
the response rate."

2. References have been added where available to the background section as suggested.

Reviewer #2

1. Minor essential revisions:

The headings 'control' and 'intervention' on table 1 and 2 have been swapped over. The headings 'control' and intervention' in the methods section have also been swapped over since the aim of this study tested the intervention of offering participants the results of the study.

2. Abstract:

We have checked the calculation of the confidence interval and chi-square statistic as requested. In the abstract we had previously reported the p and chi-square statistic from the continuity correction values, this has now been changed and we now report results from Pearson Chi-Square values and have changed the chi-square statistic to 0.16 and the corresponding p-value to 0.69 in this section and in the results section. However, we have re-run the confidence intervals and still obtain values of 0.48 to 1.63.

3. Methods:

In the sample size and statistical analysis section we have included a sentence stating the assumed baseline response rate and an additional sentence to state that "The results were analysed using SPSS 11."

4. Results:

Please see comments in the abstract section

5. Discussion:

The first sentence of the discussion has been amended to "This study found no evidence that offering study results to participants increased the response rate to a postal questionnaire" as suggested.

6. Table 2:

Table 2 had been amended to: remove the rows containing 'died, left practice, and undeliverable' and 'total number of questionnaires analysed has been inserted' as suggested.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Cockayne
Research Fellow