Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 3 June 2005

Reviewer: PHIL EDWARDS

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an excellent account and analysis of a RCT of an intervention for which there is currently substantial uncertainty about efficacy. The authors have provided good descriptions of the methods of randomisation and the materials used. The figures and tables are good and clear although one table can be simplified.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Abstract

Results I have had difficulty in replicating the odds ratio, confidence interval, Chi square statistic and corresponding p-value. I analysed the 2 by 2 table made from the first two rows of Table 2 and also obtained an odds ratio of 0.88, but with a 95% confidence interval of 0.44 to 1.66 (not 0.48 to 1.63). I also obtained a chi-square statistic of 0.16 and corresponding p-value of p=0.6931.

Methods

The authors have provided good descriptions of the methods of randomisation and the materials they used.

Sample size this should include a statement of what the baseline response rate was assumed to be.

Results

Can the authors check the calculation of the confidence interval and chi-square statistic (see above)?

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Discussion

The first sentence would be better worded: This study found no evidence that offering study results to participants increased the response rate to a postal questionnaire.

Table 2

The rows containing died, left practice and undeliverable are not needed in this table as they are apparent from Figure 1. The total number of questionnaires analysed could then be inserted (770 and 247).

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.