Reviewer's report

Title: Motives for (not) participating in a lifestyle intervention trial

Version: 1  Date: 18 February 2008

Reviewer: Sirpa-Liisa Hovi

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The methods section should be clarified and completed. In its current form it does not e.g. show how the data for the survey was collected.

1. Data collection for the survey should be described properly, how many questionnaires were delivered and what were response rates in each arm? It was nice to notice that the use of given gifts for the response was mentioned.

2. Figure 1, the flowchart of the patient recruitment is confusing. According to Sprangers et al, (ref 12) 261 persons were recruited to the ALANT-study but it cannot be found in the given flowchart. Or is the title of the Figure 1 incorrect?

2a. How the given recruitment sources differ from each other? Do they explain results? Or why these have been described separately?

2b. What are responders in the figure 1? Are they responders in the survey or participants in the trial?

Results section

3. In the title of the table 1 is said responders but in the text referring to the table is said participants. This need to be clarified.

4. The authors should be careful, being unmarried (page 8 and 9) is not opposite of "married or living together". Single is rather opposite of "married or living together" as used correctly in the abstract.

Discussion section

5. Responder and participant term should be checked. It is not quite clear what the authors want to discuss. Discussion is difficult to assess without proper methodological information.

6. On page 10 the authors say about methodology:" non-participation under the non-participants was relatively low (23%).". This sentence is very unclear: where the figure 23 comes from. Do the authors mean non-responders??

Minor Essential Revisions
Discretionary Revisions

7. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are given but I suggest a short description of the intervention as well. It would offer more information for the assessment of the non-participation.

Title
8. In the title could be given that the survey concerns participation in the CVD trial

Others:
9. On page 4 the authors say that ref 12 Sprangers et al. that the ALANT study is on the cost-effectiveness but I did not find any information about cost-effectiveness.

10. For your information: the ref 12 is not at all included in the PubMed. But it was easily available on the journal's web sites.

11. The impact of used gifts in the data collection could have been discussed as well.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests