Author's response to reviews

Title: Engaging participants in a complex intervention trial in Australian General Practice

Authors:

David Perkins (dperkins@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au)
Mark F Harris (m.f.harris@unsw.edu.au)
Jocelyn Tan (j.tan@unsw.edu.au)
Bettina Christi (b.christl@unsw.edu.au)
Jane Taggart (j.taggart@unsw.edu.au)
Mahnaz Fanaian (m.fanaian@unsw.edu.au)

Version: 5 Date: 10 July 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Norton

Thank you for re-considering our research paper “Engaging participants in a complex intervention trial in Australian General Practice” for publication in your journal.

We would like to thank the reviewers again for their thoughtful comments. We have revised the paper along the lines suggested by the reviewers as outlined in the response document and we believe it is much improved as a result.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Harris
On Behalf of the authors
July 10 2008
Author's response to reviews
Title: MS 4114212019192782 Engaging participants in a complex intervention trial in Australian General Practice

Authors:
David Perkins
Mark Harris
Jocelyn Tan
Bettina Christl
Jane Taggart
Mahnaz Fanaian

Version: 3 Date: 9 July 2008

The Biomed Central Editorial Team

Object: MS: MS 4114212019192782 Engaging participants in a complex intervention trial in Australian General Practice A/Prof David Perkins et al
Thank you for consideration of our manuscript for publication in your journal. We have revised the above manuscript according to your reviewer’s comments.

Reviewer # 1 Moira Stewart

Version: 3 Date: 9 July 2008

1. Major compulsory revisions:

1.1 I still find this paper difficult to follow. The Results Section does not clearly differentiate between practices that were "non-participants" and those who "withdrew". For example, if "withdrew" before any intervention, data collection took place, were they, in fact, "non-participants". What is the definition of early versus late intervention and what is its relevance?

We have reorganized the section on recruitment to clarify this in paragraph 2 on page 6 and paragraph 2 and paragraph 4 on page 7. We have more clearly differentiated between 1) those practices who expressed interest in the study but did not consent to participate or provide baseline data 2) those who consented and withdrew after collection of baseline data.

1.2. The first part of the Discussion does not relate to the aims and results of the study. It appears that practical considerations in implementation of the programme accounted for many of the retention problems and would cause me concern if I was supervising the research. Therefore, I feel the discussion needs further work in order for me to advise publication at present.

The discussion has been reordered. It commences with a statement of the aims and then examines the implications of the findings in a clearer fashion.

2.0 Minor
2.1 There are still some grammatical and spelling mistakes which are irritating in light of previous reviews, e.g. page 5 - 5 lines from bottom, page 6 - second sentence is too long and convoluted, 3rd sentence "However, each division etc, page 7 - last paragraph - punctuation incorrect, page 10 - 4 lines from bottom - "both" is incorrect.

Page 5 – 5 lines from bottom altered
Page 6 - 3rd sentence edited
Page 7 last paragraph edited
Page 10 last paragraph “both removed and sentence edited

Reviewer #2 Larry Green

Major Compulsory Revisions

2.1 If I have understood this situation, the human subjects review board's requirement of "arms length recruitment" had a huge, adverse effect on this project. If this is so, it would be an even more important and citable paper if this were drawn out as a clear statement.

Additional sentences have been added to paragraph 2 page 5 and to the discussion in paragraph 2 3 and 4 of the discussion on pages 8 and 9 to clarify this important finding.