Reviewer's report

Title: Identifying strategies to maximise recruitment and retention of practices and patients in a multicentre randomised controlled trial of an intervention to optimise secondary prevention for coronary heart disease in primary care.

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Reviewer: Graham C.M. Watt

Reviewer's report:

My first point was misunderstood by the authors. Perhaps this was my fault as my comment could be construed as ambiguous. It was that for this study, the investigators had the advantage of novelty, addressing the challenges of recruitment and retention in a primary care system largely unused to taking part in this sort of study. So the findings are probably of particular relevance to similar such settings. The findings may be less relevant (i.e. the approach may not be so effective) in more established research settings, where practices are used to being asked take part in research, and where problems in recruitment and retention may have different causes and solutions. But this is not a huge point.

Point two concerns the level of resource needed to establish recruitment and retention. The authors acknowledge that this was substantial, as indicated by some of the figures included in the paper, and there is reference to this issue early in the discussion. I would have been interested, in this essentially methodological and practical paper, to know what the approach costed, as appreciating the true cost of recruitment (as opposed to treating it as a "free good" is likely to be increasingly important. If not published here, it's not clear in what kind of paper such information could appear. But again, not a huge point.

The response to my third point (foot of p 12) is fine.

From my point of view, I think this paper can now be published.