Reviewer's report

Title: The fitness consultation. A way to increase muscle strength and VO2max of patients with type 2 diabetes in general practice: an 18-month intervention study

Version: 2 Date: 23 September 2010

Reviewer: Andrew Farmer

Reviewer's report:

With the exception of the instances noted below, the authors have recognised the limitations of their initial submission, and have, in detail addressed the concerns raised by the reviewers.

- Title: "... a way to increase..." suggests causation. If it was phrased as a question, that might be OK, but I'd suggest a more neutral phrase. How about "Fitness consultations in routine care of type 2 diabetes in general practice: an 18-month observational study".

- Abstract. Point made very clearly by reviewers that this is an observational study and not a trial. Therefore the authors need to be careful with wording. The Background section of the abstract still says the aim was to test "whether ... motivational interviewing combined with fitness tests ... resulted in a change in ... fitness". This is still the language of cause and effect, but, because of the design, attribution is not possible. Otherwise the abstract has been revised in line with the reviewers suggestions.

- The final section of the introduction also needs revising in line with the design. "The ... purpose of the ... study was to [test] whether general practitioners ... could motivate people ... to increase and maintain their ... fitness ...." All we can infer is whether it was feasible and acceptable to do this, and report the outcomes of those who underwent the intervention. The phrasing for the specific aim of the study has a similar problem "...to evaluate the impact of...". Since there is no comparison of a "regular diabetes control consultation", the separate impact of fitness and motivational interviewing cannot be separately evaluated.

- Tables 2 and 3 needs some measures of distribution about the delta's (change scores) to help interpret them.

- I could not find the legend or notes for Figure 2.