Reviewer's report

Title: A Mobile Phone Application for the Assessment and Management of Youth Mental Health Problems in Primary Care: Health Service Outcomes from A Randomised Controlled Trial of mobiletype

Version: 1 Date: 3 March 2013

Reviewer: Kay Wilhelm

Reviewer's report:

This study is a report of secondary outcomes from a larger RCT. As such, the paper makes some assumptions about prior knowledge.

1. In the Introduction, the ‘attention comparison’ control is mentioned before it is described.

2. Overall, the Methods section is appropriate. I did find a description of the control group in the Methods section. Again the SHO Appraisal Form is not well described.

3. In the Analyses section, the authors just state that “demographic data and missingness data are reported elsewhere”; I think there needs to be more information, at least about the group’s demographics.

4. The data appear to be sound. In the Results section, the authors state that the GPs found the feedback from the mobiletype data useful, but there is no sense of how this would translate into normal practice.

5. The study adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition as far as I can tell: I presume this information is in the description of the study.

6. In the Results section, the authors state that the GPs found the feedback from the mobiletype data useful, but there is no sense of how this would translate into normal practice. There is also not much sense of how these data are delivered back to them. I also wondered whether the patients also had access to the feedback.

7. In the Limitations, the authors to mention that participants in research trials that rely on volunteer GPs will be biased towards those who are interested and motivated and it is not clear whether others who are less motivated or interested would get any benefit.

8. Some of the discussion is rather telegraphic, particularly in the Limitations section.

In terms of style: The writing style is acceptable overall.

In summary, this is an interesting study. However, the reader is expected to be
familiar with the larger study. Some of the issues raised here are remedied by addition of a bit more detail from the other paper here to provide context for these findings.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore): Table 1 is presumably intended to be empty. It would be good to see an example of how this looked when filled in – which may make it more understandable.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct). A few small typos I noticed were:

1. In Background section: “The following questions were investigate”….needs a “d”.
2. Under Summary Reports, mobile phone “was” should be “were”.
3. The ‘attention comparison’ control should be described earlier or mention made that it will be described in Methods.
4. There is a reference missing in the Outcome Measures section.

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

1. I would like to see a bit more context and the basic demographics for group should be in here rather than alluded to in another paper
2. It needs some more detail about the usefulness of this technique for GPs in general, rather than for a special group. I had a look at the paper in Australian Family Physician which seemed to be using paediatricians and their adolescent patients. So the issue for clarification is: Is this technique really intended to be used for research or is it intended to have broader application for GPs dealing with young people? If the latter, it needs a bit more sense in how this technique will be useful.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.