Author's response to reviews

Title: Implementing referral guidelines: Lessons from a negative outcome cluster randomised factorial trial in general practice ISRCTN10184669

Authors:

Moyez Jiwa (moyez.jiwa@uwa.edu.au)
Paul Skinner (paul.skinner@sth.nhs.uk)
Akinoso Olujimi Coker (Olujimi.Coker@dbh.nhs.uk)
Lindsey Shaw (lindsey@shaw-home.freeserve.co.uk)
Michael Campbell (M.J.Campbell@sheffield.ac.uk)
Joanne Thompson (J.Thompson1@sheffield.ac.uk)

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Please find submitted a revised version of our paper. We have responded to the referees comments as flows:

1. We have given further details about how 'significant' pathologies were defined for the outcome measures.

2. We have presented data on cancer diagnosis in the study and demonstrated that even this analysis did not change the result of the study.

3. We have added several sentences in the discussion acknowledging that our interventions were not acceptable or ineffective. We acknowledge that the intervention, rather than the concept may have been the problem in this study.

4. We agree that had this trial or other such trial been shown to be successful, that we would have identified an intervention with the potential to save money and speed up diagnosis. However we cannot draw this conclusion as we had no evidence for that from this study and we do not wish to speculate beyond the results.

5. Figure 3 should be figure 2 (There are only 2 figures). This has been corrected.

6. The title has been amended.

7. Figure 1 contains screen grabs. We have not changed these as each may take up to one page. Please advise if you would prefer to present each screen grab on a separate page.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Moyez Jiwa