Reviewer's report

**Title:** Family practice nurses supporting self-management in older patients with osteoarthritis: a randomized trial

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 3 October 2007

**Reviewer:** Peter R Croft

**Reviewer's report:**

General

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

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

This is a randomised controlled trial of supported self-management for OA delivered by a nurse visiting the patient. There was no difference in self-reported and observed functional outcomes.

This is an important topic. It is not the first such trial but the data is worthwhile being in print and the basic design is robust enough for publication. I think the BMJ trial from Buscewicz’s group should be quoted as well even thought that was not health care professional supported self-management.

The trial is rather small in size but that is probably reasonable so long as the authors perhaps emphasise in the discussion that this trial was designed to estimate whether this new intervention could produce a sizeable effect as a proof of principle of this type of intervention.

However the authors should also consider highlighting that the expectation of change was realistically always going to be low – one-off advice to lose weight or to exercise has been shown before to have little effect. It is perhaps a shame that there is no process data on how many people lost weight, took up exercise etc etc.

The authors highlight the problem of length of follow-up and duration of intervention – it might help in the discussion to point out that one conclusion from the trial is that the intervention should be made more intensive in a future trial.

On its own the trial is inconclusive but will contribute reasonable data for future meta-analyses and is worth publishing.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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