Reviewer's report

Title: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial to Improve Geriatric Frailty

Version: 5 Date: 21 July 2012

Reviewer: Arnold Mitnitski

Reviewer's report:

That is generally well written and clear manuscript. It was well known that exercise and nutrition can improve health but it was less investigations about positive changes in frailty status. Still, I have several specific comment and suggestions.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. I would like to see more details of using GEE model mentioned in the methods section. If you used such an approach it should be spelt out- it is not sufficient to say that GEE was used - it is a generic techniques and may mean different things. The other question is does it necessary to use GEE in your study?

2. In the introduction, you mentioned that you used CCSHA for the first stage screening. Still, you had chosen the CHS to classify frailty. My question is: would it be possible to use the CCSHA as an outcome?

3. One limitation of the study is rooted in the application of the Fried criteria which does not allow assessment of the different degrees of frailty. The other approaches (e.g. CCSHA) could found improvements of health in people with different degrees of frailty (not only frail/pre-frail). I encourage you to discuss such a possibility.

4. Some additional references would be useful to consider. It was known from observational studies that frailty is a dynamic process and its improvement is possible. Here are three relevant references:


5. Because there are only 3 groups of Fried frailty it would be worthwhile to see the table with the numbers of transitions between all frailty states. My bet is the most improvements were from pre-frail to robust states. It would be interesting to see how these changes by the different intervention groups.
6. There is no reference to the results mentioned in the supplementary materials expect mentioning Additional files provided with this submission at the end of the manuscript. The reader has to guess what is there- much more details should be given if the authors think that the tables are of any importance. I personally do not see any reason to use the supplementary tables in the BMC Geriatrics. It is an electronic journal that imposes no limitation on the number of figures and tables. These tables could be arranged in Appendix if you think it would disrupt the presentation flow.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests