Reviewer's report

Title: One year follow-up of a pragmatic multi-centre randomised controlled trial of a group-based fatigue management programme (FACETS) for people with Multiple Sclerosis.

Version: 1
Date: 12 March 2014

Reviewer: Maria Donata Benedetti

Reviewer's report:

This is a pragmatic non-pharmacological three-centre RCT aimed to evaluated the long-term (1 year) effects of a manualised group-based programme plus current local practice (FACETS) vs current local practice alone (CLP) for managing MS-fatigue.

The topic is relevant since it is well known that both pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions have only a weak effect in limiting perceived fatigue in MS patients.

Some comments and suggestions:

Minor essential revisions
1. The Authors refer to the published protocol for method details: however, the reader would appreciate some information to remind inclusion and exclusion criteria or trial conduction (e.g. were the drugs against fatigue allowed during the trial?)
2. A brief description of the experimental and, in particular, of the control intervention would also be desirable.
3. Again, a brief paragraph describing patient characteristics (e.g. age, type of MS, EDSS score, etc) definitely affecting the outcome should be added in the Results.
4. The figure shows a very high proportion of MS patients who declined to participate: some information on the reasons would be useful.
5. It is not clear why 80/80 cases allocated to CLP received the treatment vs 72/84 in the FACETS, or why at 1yr follow-up there were 15/81 non responders in the experimental vs 8/77 in the control group: was the “traditional” treatment more well-accepted by patients?

Major revision

The ITT analyses show a modest improvement in some primary outcome measures of borderline statistical significance: given the importance to find even small effects on fatigue induced by low cost non pharmacological treatment a power analysis should be added.

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