Author's response to reviews

Title: CanPrevent: A telephone-delivered intervention to reduce multiple behavioural risk factors for colorectal cancer.

Authors:

Anna L Hawkes (Anna.Hawkes@gmail.com)
Tania A Patrao (TaniaPatrao@cancerqld.org.au)
Anita Green (anita.green@uq.edu.au)
Joanne F Aitken (JoanneAitken@cancerqld.org.au)

Version: 5 Date: 8 October 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to Reviewers Comments

We thank the reviewers for their valuable and very helpful feedback. We trust we have addressed all of the reviewer’s comments and believe the manuscript has been greatly improved based on their advice.

Reviewer#1: Annie Anderson

1. Recruitment and response

*It is unclear why 28 people were approached and what the number 28 is based on. On what grounds was this number deemed sufficient?*

Consistent with recommendations for pilot studies, we aimed to recruit participants who were representative of the study population, and we recruited sufficient numbers to provide useful information about the aspects that were being assessed for feasibility (i.e. intervention satisfaction and short-term effectiveness) (Thabane et al., BMC Medical Research Methodology, 2010). A general rule of thumb is to aim for approximately 30 participants for a pilot study, so we screened approximately 30 (n=28) potential participants for the current study. The authors acknowledge that the study was not powered to detect minimal clinically important differences and that more women participated in the study, however we feel that the results of the pilot study warrant consideration for publication as they were positive and they highlight the need for a larger trial of this multiple health behaviour change intervention. This has been detailed in the text (para 3, page 10).

Consistent with the small sample size, we have also emphasised that this was a pilot study throughout the report. We have acknowledged the small sample size as a study limitation and noted the higher proportion of female participants (para 1, page 15).

2. Assessment methods

*Can the authors provide information on the validity and reliability of the items delivered by telephone?*

The outcome measures have been previously utilised in longitudinal intervention trials over the telephone, which has now been referenced in the text (para 2, page 5; para 1, page 15).

*It would be wise to quote a reference to show that self-reported weight is accurate after an intervention. The decrease in waist is large and a comment on the reliability of self-reported waist measurement is needed.*

A comment on the use of self-reported height and weight in intervention trials has been included (para 5, page 6). As well, a comment on the reliability of self-reported waist measurement has now been included (para 1, page 7).
**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. *Delete any reference to ‘statistically significant’ or ‘significant’.*

Reference to ‘statistically significant’ or ‘significant’ has now been removed (para 2, page 11; para 1 and 2, page 12; para 2, page 13). Further, the authors have now emphasised that the study was a pilot study throughout the report.

2. *Minor issues: please consider another word for trialling.*

The word trialling or trialled is recognised in the English dictionary, however we appreciate that this may not be commonly understood and we are very happy to avoid this term (para 2, page 2; para 1 and 2, page 4).