Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of a mobile phone and web psychological program on depression, anxiety, stress, work and social functioning: A randomised controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 3 October 2013

Reviewer: Kien Hoa Ly

Reviewer's report:

I have read the paper with pleasure and interest. I think this is a great paper, and the intervention is highly innovative.

My main concern is the framing of the intervention/program. Therefore, I have put a separate sub-header that targets my concern about that in Minor Essential Revisions.

Best Hoa

Major Compulsory Revisions

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Minor Essential Revisions

126. "Based on our pilot data [10]" --> I think this should be mentioned in the Introduction. How was it designed? What were the outcomes and conclusions from that pilot?

165. "...stored on the users’ phone but instead transferred via the internet using secure sockets layer" --> Were the SMS and emails secured on the phone in any way? How? That kind of data is normally always stored locally and not on servers if the user don't remove them manually. How did you solve the security issues here?

177. "...factual information about depression, anxiety and stress, sent to their email address." --> How much information did the AC group received (how many characters long were the information)? How much (in a quantitative matter) did these texts differ from the texts that the treatment group received?

186. "...including the novelty of using mobile phones" --> It think this statement is difficult to control. It could be the content that the users received on their phone, as well as the format.

189. I would like more information here. How did you ensure that participants met the inclusion criterias? Was it done only from the online screening? What did you inform participants that scored > 63 on PSS? Was the whole procedure automated, including the email sent out to the included participants?
283. A few more sub-headers would make it easier to understand and follow the results in the Outcomes at post-intervention and follow-up section.

390. "…myCompass is an unsupported and completely automated public health intervention" --> Was there a therapist sending out email to getting the included participants started? If so, I am not sure if I would call the program completely automated.

The intervention:

42. "Mobile phone-based psychological interventions enable real time self-monitoring and…” --> I think that this framing of the intervention/program is a bit wrong. For me, this is not a mobile phone-based psychological intervention. When I read this, my thoughts are that the program is web-based and supposed to be used on a computer. That's the core of the intervention. The mobile phone component is only to remind the user and give him/her small tips. If this is not the case, I think it is important to explain the intervention more in depth and how you expect the different components to interact with each other, and what purpose they have in the intervention.

148. "…self-monitor moods, symptoms and/or behaviours on their mobile phone or computer." --> What is the core of the treatment program? For me I think that the web based modules distributed via computer are the core of the treatment program. This should be made clear to the reader. Also, when and how did the users rate their mood?

149. "…choose dimensions they wish to rate" --> Are dimensions the same as modules?

154. "…receive and print graphical feedback about their” --> How and when were this feedback received? Did the users received the feedback on their phones? What was the feedback on?

157. "...interactive psychological modules" --> It would be great if you could explain in what way are they interactive.

395. "…suggest that mobile phones provide an ideal platform for” --> not sure if the mobile phone component was the active program element.

Figure 1. I noticed that there were a lot more attrition lost in myCompass than AC and WL. I think it would be great if this was addressed somewhere.

References. The paper could use more references.

Discretionary Revisions

178. "information was designed to be interesting” --> I am curious how the information was designed to be interesting? And how did you control that people experience the information to be interesting?

298. I think the the F-value should be reported here.
I am curious about this statement; did the data show any difference between participants that adhered (more) to the program compared to participants that did not?

Same here: did the data show any difference between participants that adhered (more) to the program compared to participants that did not?

Small mistakes in the language or formulation:

84. "Reasons include including lack of service"

92. "...on the person and turned on" [all the time] (or ... and are always turned on)

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.