Reviewer’s report

Title: Is there a demand for physical activity interventions provided by the health care sector? Findings from a population survey

Version: 2 Date: 11 November 2009

Reviewer: Chris Roberts

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have largely addressed the issues that I raised but a few issues remain that could further strengthen the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions

P6 First paragraph, should read ‘The sample was stratified by…’.

P6 The authors now put more emphasis on potential study limitations, particularly the issues relating to using self-report measures of physical activity and the lack of formal validation. It’s also the case that for the purposes of the paper, the key issue would seem to be differentiating between those who are more or less active, rather than providing precise estimates of those meeting recommended levels. However, having now seen the actual questions used in the survey, I believe that it would helpful to add a little more detail on the adequacy of the items, in particular their ability to measure those meeting recommended levels for health benefits. For example, it’s not clear how combining the proportions reporting physical activity every day/almost every day (Q1) and vigorous activity on a regular basis (Q2) is equivalent to 30 minutes or more moderate intensity activity on 5 or more days a week. Similarly, the inactive category seems to include those doing everyday activity a few times a week alongside those doing none at all (Q1).

P7 First paragraph, should read ‘…for conducting a physically active lifestyle…’.

P7 Second paragraph, clarify the term ‘self-reported economy’, which I believe is a measure of income or socio-economic position.

P9 Add the actual proportion of smokers who wanted to quit smoking—it currently says one third.

P10 Second paragraph, should read ‘…showed that, approximately one third…’.

P12 Inconsistent referencing with Allbright et al. and Johansson et al.

Discretionary Revisions

P5 The authors do now acknowledge that exercise referral schemes differ but I still think a cautionary note about the limited evidence of effectiveness of such interventions could be noted.
P7 Some additional text has been added on how responses for a number of questions were dichotomised. I’m assuming that this was for ease of presentation but the authors may wish to confirm.

P8 Presumably the complex samples module available with SPSS was used for analyses? I’d suggest noting this in the text.

P9 For the sake of completeness I’d include the proposed Table 4 with details of the data on responsibility and note this in the text.

P11 While I did suggest some information on the other potential behaviour changes, it should be noted that the figure for wanting to change their tobacco use can only sensibly be based on smokers and is therefore not really comparable with the proportion in the general population wishing to be more active. In fact the same argument could be applied to the other behaviours. Perhaps this issue could be raised somewhere.

P14 The authors might consider their emphasis on precision in the final paragraph of the discussion given the potential concerns about bias noted earlier.

A final read through and some minor edits would improve the quality of the written English.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.