Author's response to reviews

Title: Using intervention mapping (IM) to develop a self-management program for employees with a chronic disease in the Netherlands

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor and Reviewers,

We thank you for the opportunity to resubmit our manuscript “Using intervention mapping (IM) to develop a self-management program for employees with a chronic disease in the Netherlands”. We would like to thank the editor and all the reviewers for their valuable comments. To facilitate the reviewing process, we have marked all the changes made in the text. Marked in green revision 2 and marked in blue revision 3.

We are looking forward to your reaction.

Sincerely yours,

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Reviewer: Marie José Durand

Reviewer's report:

Methods
Page 5 (step 1, 1st paragraph): The sentence “These investigations involve the application of behavioural determinants theories such as ....” is not very clear. How were these theories applied? Were they combined? Also, in step 2, it is written that the theory of planned behaviour was chosen. Why did the authors choose this theory compared to the other models?

We agree that the sentence “These investigations involve the application of behavioural determinants theories such as ....” is not very clear. The theory of planned behaviour is the main theoretical framework we used for study. Nevertheless the theory of planned behaviour is grounded on earlier theories such as the social cognitive theory and the protection motivation theory. We have clarified this sentence in the text on page 5.

Page 6 (step 3, 1st paragraph): What is the difference between “change theories” and “theoretical change methods”?

Change theories are theories used in the theoretical framework of the training and theoretical change methods are the strategies used in the training to influence the determinants of behaviour. We agree that change theories and theoretical change methods seem the same for the reader. We have therefore changed the theoretical change methods into theory-based change strategies and referred to table 2.

Page 7 (step 5, 2nd paragraph): This paragraph presents how they implemented the program and would seem more appropriate in the result section. In the method section, it would be more pertinent to describe how they chose the implementation strategies, how was the training plan developed, ...

We understand the comment of the reviewer. This article is as explained in the introduction and method section (and in our first revision) is not a study protocol but a research article to describe the steps of intervention mapping. In the method section we have explained the content of step 5 and in the results section we have described how we have implemented the program.

Results

Page 15 (2nd paragraph): When referring to “master trainer at Stanford University”, does that mean to be certified to offer the program? Also, what are the qualifications needed for the 2nd trainer that is not trained at Stanford University?
On page 12 we have added information on the master trainers program and on the qualifications for the 2nd trainer.

Page 17 (3rd paragraph): Just to make sure we understood correctly the last sentence of this paragraph: the data of the participants from the control group that also received the experimental intervention were analysed in the control group but not in the intervention group. Did the authors include a follow-up? If more than 8 months, could that bias the results?

Both groups have been followed 8 months. Therefore there results of our evaluation study are not biased by our approach. We have clarified in the text that both groups have been followed for eight months.

Page 18 (3rd paragraph): Who was blinded to allocation? It seems that the participants knew in which group they were allocated.

Participants have been blindly allocated at the start of the study to the control or the intervention group. After randomization, the participants have been informed to which group they have been allocated.

Discussion

Page 19 (2nd paragraph) and page 20 (2nd paragraph): The discussion related with time consumption is contradictory. The authors started by saying that IM is a time-consuming process and that this was an important concern. In fact, it took them only 3 months to adapt the intervention plan. Also, it would be interesting to specify the steps involved in the adaptation of the intervention (Steps 1 to 4?). We understand that the whole process including the implementation and evaluation could take much more than 3 months.

The adaptation of the intervention comprised three months; analyzing the conclusions of step 1 until step 4. The actual step 1 (focus group interviews and literature review) has taken longer than three months. We have clarified this sentence in the text.

Page 19 (3rd paragraph): It is not clear how “social-cognitive theory and goal-setting theory” were used in this study. In the method section, it is written that the theory of planned behaviour was chosen (step 2).

We have clarified this sentence in the text according to the comments on page 1.

Page 19 (4th paragraph): Last sentence, the authors suggest to screen the “IM checklist”. Do they refer to the six steps (figure 1)?

On page 20 we have added (figure 1) in brackets to clarify the “IM checklist”.

Discretionary revisions:

Table 3: In the last column, there are questions and topics. It would be more interesting to use a uniform format. For example, instead of “which situation cause stress, pain or fatigue at work?”, you can write “Situations causing stress, pain or fatigue at work”.

We have changed the sentences in table 3 according to the suggestions of the reviewer.

Page 17 (2nd paragraph): This paragraph is related with the recruitment of participants for the RCT. Could be moved to Step 6.

We understand the suggestion of the reviewer that the recruitment of participants is part of the RCT, but we prefer to describe the recruitment in step 5 as this step describes the implementation of the program in the context of the evaluation study.
We understand the comment of the reviewer that the design and sample size are part of the method of the evaluation study. This article is not a study protocol but a research article to describe the steps of intervention mapping. In this paper the development of a study design and the power calculation to estimate the sample size are part of the results of IM.