Author's response to reviews

Title: Study protocol: a randomised controlled trial investigating the effect of a healthy lifestyle intervention for people with severe mental disorders

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To: Editor of BMC Public Health

22nd December, 2010

Dear Editor,

Re: ‘Study protocol: a randomised controlled trial investigating the effect of a healthy lifestyle intervention for people with severe mental disorders’ (MS: 1024616714496915)

Thank you for responding so promptly to our initial submission of the above named manuscript. A revised version of the manuscript has been prepared, which now includes a brief Discussion section outlining some of the challenging operational issues associated with this trial, together with an Acknowledgements section detailing funding and other support (see pages 14-16).

As noted in our original submission letter, this manuscript describes study methods for an important area of research, multiple health behaviour change among people with severe mental disorders. The protocol has already been peer-reviewed (both by the funding bodies and the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Newcastle) and, as the methods are extensive, we wish to publish them in full so that we can refer to them briefly when publishing the trial results. As physical health problems among people with mental health problems is a rapidly developing area of research, we believe this paper to be of high interest to your readership.

In response to your specific questions about the funding received for this project, we offer the following comments:
We have been successful in obtaining two competitive NHMRC Project Grants for the current project: **ID: 569210** - 2009 to 2011 ($773,000): A/Prof. Amanda Baker et al., “Improving the lifestyle of people with psychotic illnesses”; and **ID: APP1009351** – 2011 to 2012 ($436,085): Prof. Amanda Baker et al., “Follow-up of healthy lifestyles intervention for cardiovascular disease among people with a psychotic disorder”.

The following extracts from the NHMRC’s website should clarify the nature of this funding body:

“The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia’s peak body for supporting health and medical research; for developing health advice for the Australian community, health professionals and governments; and for providing advice on ethical behaviour in health care and in the conduct of health and medical research.”


“NHMRC relies on peer review to judge the relative quality of research proposals competing for funding and this can only occur with the assistance of the researchers who participate on the peer review panels. Good peer review relies on the fact and the perception that it is fair, informed, expert, able to identify quality and generally able to undertake the task without fear or favour. To maintain a high level of independence and increase the transparency of the peer review process, the NHMRC Academy has been established to assist with these processes.”


“The Project Grants Scheme is the NHMRC’s main avenue of support for individuals and small teams of researchers undertaking biomedical, public health and health services research in Australian universities, medical schools, hospitals and other research institutions.”


As requested, we have also removed previously uploaded files regarding proof of ethics and funding.

Sincerely,

Amanda Baker PhD

On behalf of all authors