Reviewer’s report

Title: Weight Watchers on prescription: An observational study of weight change among adults referred to Weight Watchers by the NHS

Version: 1 Date: 15 February 2011

Reviewer: Kate Jolly

Reviewer’s report:

The authors present the results of a large observational study of Weight watchers on prescription from primary in the UK. The methods use data collected routinely by the Weight Watchers organisation and are clearly described. Results are clearly presented for all participants who commenced the service, those who commenced their first ever course of WW on prescription and by subsequent courses. As well as actual weight lost the % of initial body weight lost was also given.

The discussion is clear and supported by the data and placed into context with other key research. Limitations are acknowledged.

Minor essential revisions:
I have two points that need amending:

1. In the abstract conclusion the first sentence reads: 'A third of all patients referred to WW...' it would be more correct to state 'who were referred to and started..' as there is no data for those referred who did not activate the prescription.

2. In the results (page 6, first line under heading ‘Weight change’): it is not clear if weight change data was calculated only on participants who attended at least twice or whether no change was assumed for those who attended only one session. This needs to be clarified in the methods for all the analyses.

3. Figure 3: the columns were not distinguishable when printed in black and white.

Dr Kate Jolly, 15 Feb 2011

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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'