Reviewer's report

**Title:** A qualitative evaluation of a family-based walking intervention - Furness Families Walk4Life

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 25 February 2011

**Reviewer:** Rebecca Murphy

**Reviewer's report:**

This paper makes an important contribution to evaluation of health promotion interventions. The paper is well written and presents some interesting points. The lessons learned approach is one that is much needed to inform health promotion practice. However, it is important for the authors to be clear in a number of factors presented below.

**MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS**

**Method**

1. Subheading evaluation - there is no mention of sampling techniques and therefore it is difficult to understand how and why individuals become participants. On what basis were certain individuals selected and why did you choose your sample size? More detail is needed here.

2. Subheading evaluation - more detail required of exactly whom the programme staff and stakeholder were

3. Subheading evaluation - not clear why focus groups and interviews were utilised for the purposes of data collection.

4. Subheading "data analysis" - authors suggest principles of inductive content analysis were utilised. Previous section suggests deductive analysis was utilised since a structured interview/questioning route was chosen. This needs clarification - more explanation of the analysis is required.

5. Subheading "data analysis" - reference required for "inductive content analysis".

6. No statement that ethical approval for the study was obtained. Please include such a statement.

**Results**

7. General comments - the results section provides context and analysis of findings, however there is severely limited inclusion of any data in this section. This section needs inclusion of more data.

**Discussion**

8. The first sentence of the discussion is inconsistent in relation to the previously stated aims of the evaluation - the issue of child care commitments in relation to
the aim of the programme is not mentioned previously within the method section when describing the intervention. Although this may be an aim of the intervention it is not a significant finding and therefore should be removed as the first sentence.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

Introduction

9. Whilst appreciating the restrictions imposed by word limits I would suggest inclusion or reference to the importance of "process" evaluation to health promotion interventions.

10. Whilst appreciating the restrictions imposed by word limits I would suggest inclusion or reference to evaluation guidelines for health promotion interventions.

Method

11. General comment in relation to method section - the methodology adopted is not explained in any great depth, nor the epistemological positioning of the authors explained.

Results

12. Subheading "working in partnership" - participant quote; there is no participant number or reference to interview transcript

13. Subheading "Experiences of the intervention" - the most enjoyable aspect of the intervention for participants in social interaction. This is also reflected in the inclusion of social interaction within the discussion of the paper. From a readers perspective the positioning of this finding within the section means that the importance is diminished. I would suggest restructuring this section to place the issue of "social interaction" as the first aspect discussed under this subheading.

14. With reference to 16 lesson learned - not sure it is necessary to include them in the text if they are also included within a table. I like the ability to link the lessons learned to specific sections of the results however this may also be represented within the table in some format.

Discussion

15. Paragraph 5 - suggest changing "another key learning" to "another key lesson"

16. Paragraph 6 - supporting citations required in relation to evaluation in health promotion.

17. Paragraph 7 - "overall we feel the focus groups and interview techniques were a strength of this investigation." I agree, but feel this needs expanding since the rationale for using such methods is not outlined within the method section.

18. Paragraph 7 - "while self-reported data from focus groups may be subject to certain limitations" - more detail needed and reference to scientific literature. What exactly are the limitations?
DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

Abstract
19. First paragraph; typographical error. Change "deliver" to "delivery"
20. Second paragraph; programme staff and participants can also be considered stakeholders of a programme. For ease of reading and clarity suggest altering sentence to encompass staff, participants, Ramblers and Action for Children as stakeholders of the programme.

Discussion
21. Paragraph 5 - suggest changing "another key learning" to "another key lesson"

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

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.