Reviewer's report

Title: Facilitating adherence to physical activity: exercise professionals' experiences of the National Exercise Referral Scheme in Wales. A qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 17 November 2011

Reviewer: Erja Toropainen

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- Discretionary Revisions

These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

Some questions and recommendations

Background describes that 1/3 patient do not attend a first appointment and completion rates are 12-50 % . (66-68)

Is it possible to make up the information by explaining reasons why patients had not come and had professionals any contact or discussions with them afterwards.

When the exercise professionals took part in the telephone interview, did their answers connected with persons, whom they had met in exercise referral process or was it possible for them to think and answer more general.

Sample and procedures (162-173) describes that 38 professionals took part in interview. How long history professionals had as an exercise instructor? How many participants each professional had met in referral process and in exercise groups?

How many of the interviewed professionals had met or tutored mental health patients in referral process? In results mental health is especially connected with theme 2 and comprised subthemes (201-204).

One subtheme in theme 2 is social networks (394-441). Fostering social networks facilitates uptake, adherence and support long-term behavioural change. Some persons don’t like group activities and some join the group only for physical activity without need for social network. Could it bee possible in discussion to reflect, what kind of exercise counselling, physical activity programs and actions should be developed to enhance versatile physical activity on population level.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
This is the qualitative survey on facilitating adherence to physical activity. The data was collected in the National Exercise Referral Scheme in Wales. The posed questions by the authors were well defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods (semi-structured telephone interview and thematic analysis) are appropriate and well described.

3. Are the data sound?
The data are sound.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
The manuscript is adhered on the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition. The thematic analysis and “anonymous quotations” illustrates well the research perspectives and the real world.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Limitations of the work are clearly stated and deliberated in discussion.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes they do.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The title and abstract are informative and accurately express results.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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