Reviewer's report

Title: Keeping participants on board: increasing uptake by automated respondent reminders in an Internet-based Chlamydia Screening in the Netherlands

Version: 1 Date: 10 November 2011

Reviewer: Jennifer Walker

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. The content of the article is interesting and very beneficial to this area of research. I feel that there should be further analysis of the data presented and some of the results should be examined further. The issue of how to manage such extensive follow up in such an important program is very important to explore and with some revisions, this article would be worthwhile publishing in BMC Public Health.

Jennifer Walker

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Please number your comments and divide them into
- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract: Results: 99% provided an email address and 72% a cell phone number. How many people provided neither and how many provided both? Include these details in the results section of the manuscript as well as it is important to know how many people (n) are without access to email or mobile phones.

2. Abstract: Conclusions: ‘Nearly all respondents were reachable by modern communication media.’ Please quantify as this suggests some were not contactable by either email or mobile phone.

3. Abstract: Results: ‘sample increase from 10% to 14% …. Round 2: from 7% to 10%..’ are these figures statistically different?


5. Methods: Paragraph 2: ‘If no sample arrived at the laboratory within 2 to 3 weeks after package sending, the respondent automatically received 1, respectively, 2 email reminder(s).’ Please clarify what this means. How is it automated? What if they provided a mobile phone number and no email address?

6. Methods: Paragraph 3: this should read as in the results section and some analysis of the differences between the response rates, participation rates and the positivity rates would be great to include.
7. Results: paragraph 2 and 4: ensure that there are the same results as in your tables. Including Odds ratios with confidence intervals provides more information about the specificity of the results which is important when working with such a large sample size.

8. Results: paragraph 3: There is mention of the change in ‘package request rate’ amongst other things with the data presented as proportions but no analysis to determine the level of difference between the two figures. Was this a significant increase or decrease? If so what was the magnitude of this?

9. Results: paragraph 5: There needs to be more analysis of the data, it is insufficient to state: “Based on figure 3, the remainder email(s) and SMS seem to have slightly increased the sample return…and ‘This may have had a small additional effect (Figure 3)”’. This is the same for comparing positivity rates of chlamydia in the last paragraph.

10. The discussion: The discussion will be dependent on the findings of the analysis of the differences between the results which still need further exploration.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Methods: data collection: ‘Sociodemographic data was available…’ Should read ..were.. available.

2. Methods: Paragraph 1: Process data on invitations, reminders and laboratory results were automatically generated..’ from which date were they generated? The date that the packages were due/received/sent out? Please clarify.

3. Methods: Paragraph 2: The use of the word ‘demand’ might read as a stronger word than intended.

4. Methods: paragraph 8: It might be beneficial to define ‘sexual risk variables’ and include a reference for this as these risks can vary from country to country.

5. Results: paragraph 1: ‘pone’ should read ‘phone’.

- Discretionary Revisions

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.