Reviewer's report

Title: High-intensity compared to moderate-intensity training for exercise initiation, enjoyment, adherence, and intentions: an intervention study

Version: 1  Date: 23 January 2014

Reviewer: M. Renee Umstattd Meyer

Reviewer’s report:

While this manuscript begins to fill a notable gap in the literature concerning potential benefits of high intensity functional training, there are a few areas that need to be further addressed in this manuscript (please see below).

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. More information and rationale regarding the self-report measures used in this study are needed. The authors also need to include a description and rationale for their intention measure, this is currently missing (pgs. 6-7). There are pre-existing measures of exercise enjoyment and intention; however, it doesn’t see that these were used. The authors should address why they selected their measures.

2. More detail regarding the qualitative findings needs to be included in the results section. Please include a description of which provided reasons were coded as “intrinsic” and which provided reasons were coded as “extrinsic”. In addition, please report how many people provided each of these specific responses. This information might be best reported in a table.

3. Please include information on recruitment. Did all participants know about both group types (modes)? If ART participants knew that CrossFit was an option and were not assigned to that group, is it possible that ART participants stated they “planned to try CrossFit” because of this? Could this knowledge have introduced potential bias? Please make these details and potential bias apparent within the manuscript.

4. Conclusions: Please address the public health implications for people who start out with a lower exercise enjoyment level. You mention this briefly on pg. 8 with ART potentially being a better fit for these folks, but then this finding is not tied into the conclusions section. Is HIFT the best mode to start with for these folks based on your results, or are there other public health implications / approaches that should be considered for those with lower enjoyment levels?

- Minor Essential Revisions

5. Abstract: Methods – The sentence regarding the ART group’s sessions is a bit confusing. It is difficult to discern how many days and which days included which types of workouts. I think rewording this will help reduce confusion.

6. Abstract: Results – please use the term “adherers” consistently throughout this
section. Switching between the term “adherer” and “participant” for the groups left me a bit confused. I think if you are consistent in using these terms it will help your readers understand your results better.

7. Pg. 5, line 3: I think you mean “importance” instead of “important”

8. Pg. 6 “main outcome measures”: please specify that the initiation question is qualitative.

9. Pg. 7, line 2: Please provide rationale for why 90% was used as the adherence “cut point”.

10. Pg. 7 – Please include information for the scale and stadiometer used to collect height and weight.

11. Pg. 7, 2nd paragraph, final sentence: it would help with readability to state which research questions the inferential statistics were used to examine.

12. Pg. 7, Results, lines 3-4: Please indicate which groups went with each reason for dropping out.

13. Pg. 8-9, Limitations: please include potential biases regarding the self-report measures used in this study.

14. Pg. 9, Limitations: provide more detail regarding the potential bias of the small sample in this study.

- Discretionary Revisions

none.

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.