Reviewer's report

Title: Psychophysiological effects of a web-based stress management system. A prospective, randomized controlled intervention study of IT and media workers.

Version: 2 Date: 24 April 2005

Reviewer: Cristina Botella

Reviewer's report:

General Review:
1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
The problem posed by the authors is well defined and it is very interesting.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
Yes.
3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes
6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes
7. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

The article has a lot of interest because is focused in an interesting and growing field as telemedicine and telepsychology. We don't have well controlled studies focused on the efficacy of health sites and web-based tools, and as the authors underline, even fewer of these studies have assessed both psychological and physiological effects of the intervention. For this reason scientifically sound data are welcome.

My recommendation is to publish this work with minor changes:

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. The authors speak about a follow period of six months, but this is not correct. In the present work they present a period of intervention of six months and they do not use follow up. The authors only say that they are collecting and analysing data from a follow-up period but these data are not presented in the manuscript.
2. I don't understand why in the statistical analysis they use a two-tailed test. In fact they have a prediction and could use a one-tailed test.
3. The authors mentioned in page 21 a possible problem of mass-significance because of a multitude of items and physiological markers were used. They could use MANOVAS grouping in a coherent way some variables in order to know the global impact of the intervention.
4. Would be interesting if the authors would provide the Internet site address in order to check the
appearance and the usability of the site.

5. A more important point is to know if the authors controlled the use of some psychotropic drugs by
the participants. They say that the study was conducted during a period of stress. It could be
possible that the participants took some pills in order to overcome this difficult situation. The authors
should inform about this question, and if they dont have data about this point to underline it in the
discussion section.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests