Reviewer's report

Title: Less healthy, but more active: opposing selection biases when recruiting older people to a physical activity study through primary care

Version: 1 Date: 3 March 2008

Reviewer: Ngaire Kerse

Reviewer's report:

this is a concise paper answering a distinct aim in a novel way. The study has met its aim and the information is of value to researchers and physical activity practitioners.

in my view there are no major compulsory revisions

Minor essential revisions:

the potential effect of a response bias to completion of the questionnaire has not been sufficiently spelled out in the discussion. Although age and gender of those sending back the Q'aire was similar to those not sending it back, the response rate to this part of the study was still low. Therefore it is possible the result would have been quite different if it was those who were too busy and active to fill in the Q'aire that didn't. The acknowledgement of this as a limitation could be clearer.

justification of the GDS score of 4 rather than 5 as the distinction between depressed and not is missing. A higher score may have led to greater discernment of a depression effect (found in other studies)

There is little info available about the process of recruitment or the participant flow and the cited article is unavailable to the general reader.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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'