Author's response to reviews

Title: The Sandwell Project: a controlled evaluation of a programme of targeted screening for prevention of cardiovascular disease in primary care

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To whom it may concern,

**Re: 1414187621573800**

I have made minor revisions to this paper in response to the reviewers’ comments. These revisions are detailed on the following pages.

You have requested details of ethics committee approval. For the purposes of research governance the evaluation was registered with Sandwell Primary Care Trust. The advice given was that ethics committee approval was not required as this was evaluation of a planned service change.

The project was the evaluation of a planned service change implemented in Sandwell. In effect the planned service change was implemented in several general practices and implemented a year later in several more general practices. The evaluation used routinely available data to compare outcomes in these two groups of outcomes.

I may have added to confusion about this by changing the name of the paper. One of the reviewers (Einbinder) requested that the evaluation should be described as a controlled trial in order to make the presentation clearer. However this gives the impression that this was primarily a research project. This may be misleading. I have clarified this in a number of ways.

I have slightly changed the title. The new title is: “The Sandwell Project: a controlled evaluation of a programme of targeted screening for prevention of cardiovascular disease in primary care”

I have added to the some phrases to the Background that the project was implemented in a stepped manner (in effect as a controlled trial). I have specified that the in the control group, full implementation was delayed for a year and that the intervention was extended to the control group one year after the start of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Marshall

Senior Lecturer in Public Health
**Reviewer: Jonathan S Einbinder**

The reviewer indicates that the paper ahs been improved and that the remaining issues are mostly minor.

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. Abstract contains sentence fragments and grammatical errors  
   *These have been corrected.*

**Minor essential revisions**

2. Page 7 – please include a sentence about how the practices were assigned.  
   *This has been clarified.*

3. Page 8 – 95% confidence intervals are not necessary and could be removed  
   *Most of the 95% confidence intervals have been removed.*

4. Clarify what is meant for a patient to be assessed at a control practice. What is the definition of eligible for a drug treatment at an intervention practice  
   *A sentence has been added to clarify this.*

**Reviewer: Serguei Pakhomov**

Accept without revision.