Reviewer's report

**Title:** Singing teaching as a therapy for chronic respiratory disease - a randomised controlled trial and qualitative evaluation

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 1 June 2010

**Reviewer:** Dianna Kenny

**Reviewer's report:**

I am often dismayed by the review process when authors spend time and energy responding to reviewers' comments but ultimately make very few changes to the actual manuscript, which will become the public document. This is the case for this manuscript.

I asked for a more precise description of the singing lessons. After trawling through all the documents submitted, I found a somewhat rambling account of only 3 lessons but there was still no description of actual singing or breathing exercises - it is stated only that participants will "practice a number of physical, breathing and vocal exercises at home." There was no list of songs or the reason for their selection. To state that participants will sing "half a dozen songs in different genres" tells us nothing. Studies should present sufficient data to allow replication. As it stands this study cannot be replicated because we have little idea about what the intervention comprised.

There is a little more specificity for the physical warm ups - that "include postural awareness and gentle bodywork including stretches, relaxation, breathing and vocal exercises (both formal and informal), rhythm games using vocal sounds and/or body percussion, call and response vocal games, short rounds and echo songs, improvisation, solo and unison work, half a dozen unison songs from different musical genres," but still not enough to replicate the program. Examples of each technique would be helpful.

I note that there was a focus on individual needs as indicated by the statement that "specific breathing, physical, vocal technique as required for each patient to concentrate on for homework" yet the researchers were not prepared to engage in individual analysis of the data to further elucidate some of the results which were difficult to interpret.


The authors state that the study was a feasibility study so sample size calculations were not conducted. Perhaps it would be advisable to do a NNT analysis.
Ultimately, the paper is not satisfying as it stands.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests’