Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of web-based follow-up response in the Prevention of Low Back Pain the Military Trial

Version: 3 Date: 13 March 2011

Reviewer: Cecilia Bergström

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript again. I am overall satisfied with the author’s answers and changes of the manuscript and thank the authors for their work. However, there are a few errors that need to be corrected and some issues that still need to be addressed.

Pages are not numbered so I'll have to refer to paragraphs and headings.

Introduction

Next last paragraph – I believe that there is one to many “and” in the last sentence …BMI, sex, and ethnicity and retention at one year follow-up. However, I may have misinterpreted it.

Methods

Setting and participants

Last sentence – I would prefer a separate heading for “Ethical approval” – however, this is a discretionary comment.

In the method part it is very well described the content of the questions in the survey, however, I still would be interested in the total numbers of questions asked as this could possibly influence the results – in this case response-rate.

I am very satisfied with the clarification in regard to different groups as well as previous exercise regime.

In the answer to reviewer’s comments it is stated that correction has been made to a missing “-“ (dash). However, the entire sentence seems to have been removed. However, I take that this is correct.

Data analysis

Is it necessary to state in parenthesis “age (years)” and “sex (male/female)”? It feels a little bit redundant.

Last paragraph – It is unnecessary to use bold and italic for the word “each”

Results
First paragraph – it states that 55% had college education or more and then there is a reference to Table 1. However, I can’t find a number in Table 1 that coincides with the percentage stated in the manuscript. I believe it may be a type O as all other percentages are correct.

Discussion

I think my initial comment was misinterpreted, probably due to the fact that it was poorly formulated. What I meant was that I would have liked to have a discussion about other more novel methods in regard to reminders in follow-up surveys i.e. SMS (text message) reminders. There are some interesting articles in the field. Please refer to articles below (this comment is discretionary).

The role of mobile phones in improving vaccination rates in travelers.

The Nordic back pain subpopulation program: can low back pain patterns be predicted from the first consultation with a chiropractor? A longitudinal pilot study.
Kongsted A, Leboeuf-Yde C.
Chiropr Osteopat. 2010 Apr 29;18:8.

References

References need to be looked over, both in the reference list as well as in the manuscript. Please see below instructions taken from BMC web page.

(i) References must be cited in the text using consecutive numbers in square brackets. References must be cited before the full stop.

(ii) The reference list should be formatted in the journal's style to enable us to create links to article abstracts on PubMed.

Example article reference:

Figure

I’m missing both the text and numbers in Figure 1, thus I’m unable to evaluate it in regard to content.

Figure 2 gives a very nice overview of the response rate over time.

Tables

There are still inconsistencies in how numbers are presented in Table 1 (length of service and PSEP).

The p-value in Table 1 “Exercise Group” is reported with 4 decimals which is
inconsistent with the rest of the table.

**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.