Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of a one week multidisciplinary inpatient self-management programme for patients with fibromyalgia: a randomised controlled trial

Version: 3 Date: 22 April 2012

Reviewer: Borja Sañudo

Reviewer's report:

The study is oriented to gain insight into the use of self-management programs for patients with fibromyalgia. The methodologies seem to be properly utilized. However, I have concerns about the experimental design utilized. Unless the authors further explain this in the manuscript, I do not know how the current design can tell the difference between their object of study and SMP aftereffects. For me, it is not clear how the changes found after one week of SMP can lead to long-term effects.

Abstract

1. With only these results, how can you make such strong conclusions? You stating that one week SMP can result in enhanced skills and behaviors that lasts a long-term?

Introduction

1. The rationale does not seem strong enough for the utilization of self-management programs in this patient group.
2. Why authors decided to evaluate one week intervention?
3. If non-pharmacological recommendations include short-term self-management programmes. What’s the interest of this manuscript?
4. Include a reference supporting “In a study among Norwegian physicians and medical students FM scored lowest on disease prestige”

Methods and results

5. “…Of these, 58 participants in the treatment group and 60 in the control group completed the study”. Authors should include the specific reasons for not completing the intervention.
6. Please include reasons for participants’ exclusion in results section (page 9). Exclusion criteria does not exclude other non-pharmacological treatments which are common in this population. May this be the case of your patients?
7. Why both groups were not equally distributed? (75 in the intervention group and 72 in the waiting list group).
8. Control group did not receive any treatment at the hospital in the period from inclusion to participating in the SMP. But have they received any treatment out of
9. Please rewrite the sentence “In order to balance the groups, the baseline 2 variables of the dependent variable were included as a covariate.”

10. Please include an ICC analysis between baseline 1 and 2.

11. All questionnaires were sent out by mail and these patients have problems in understanding the items, mainly in the FIQ questionnaire. How did you manage this?

12. Fibromyalgia patients are characterized for a great variability in their symptoms severity and inter-subject variability? In just one week this situation is even more sensitive. Have all patients responded to the intervention? In addition, patients are aged between 20 and 70 years. Are there differences between them?

13. Please be caution with the use of textual information “The SMP also makes use of an empowering approach to help patients who, by developing knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours, are able to take responsibility for their own health management and daily life…” used in Hamnes et al. (2011)

14. In the results section the authors are perhaps over emphasising the effects of a one week multidisciplinary inpatient self-management programme.

Discussion

15. Be consistent with the use of FM throughout the manuscript but also with the use of abbreviations (EC-17; GHQ-20,...).

16. The discussion should be focused towards your true findings rather than what others have found previously. While that is important to give context to the findings, the reviewer wasn’t sure of what your findings mean and in which context. The discussion needs an entire revision.

17. In the discussion, the authors should mention the implications for managing fibromyalgia patients if any. But authors state that “there is a possibility that processes initiated during the current SMP may result in measurable changes after a longer period of time.” If they have not measure these results.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests