Reviewer's report

Title: Integrating an Internet-mediated walking program into family medicine clinical practice: a pilot feasibility study

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Reviewer: James Ralston

Reviewer's report:

The paper has improved with revision. I commend the authors for showing improvements in walking using the SUH program.

I also commend the authors for developing and testing an electronic referral process in a healthcare setting system where they cannot integrate with the existing electronic record system. This is a significant challenge. I also agree with the authors that all PCMH approaches support a team based care that enables allied health professionals to take on new roles for preventive and chronic care. These roles could include physical activity counseling, which would address a key barrier to provider counseling for physical activity. The authors have also done considerable work at creating a usable clinical interface as a workaround for referring patients outside of the practices EMR.

By what is presented in the paper, though, I am not convinced that the study sufficiently integrated the referral process into the flow of primary care. They reported on the impact in clinic workflow but I did not see that active engagement with the team to establish the best workflow and one that would address the barrier of physician time and perceived burden. “Physician viewed referrals as additional time burden”. As reported in Phase II results, they may have happened on to process that might work best where physician recommends and MA refers, but it is not clear if this was vetted further with teams as a potential standard workflow or would become standard practice in a larger RCT. For large scale uptake in a trial and to be concordant with PCMH principles, clearly working out these roles and responsibilities is key.

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:

None