Author's response to reviews

Title: Nurse- and peer-led self-management programme for patients with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator; a feasibility study

Authors:

Esther STF Smeulders (e.smeulders@zw.unimaas.nl)
Jolanda CM van Haastregt (j.vanhaastregt@zw.unimaas.nl)
Barbara K Dijkman-Domanska (b.dykman@cardio.azm.nl)
Elisabeth FM van Hoef (m.vhoe@adcc.azm.nl)
Jacques THM van Eijk (j.vaneijk@zw.unimaas.nl)
Gertrudis IJM Kempen (g.kempen@zw.unimaas.nl)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editors,

Enclosed you will find the revised manuscript “Nurse- and peer-led self-management programme for patients with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator; a feasibility study” (re-titled, first submitted as: “Nurse-led self-management programme for patients with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator; an exploratory study”). In this cover letter a point-by-point response to the concerns is given.

Concerns Referee 1 (Dr. Sears):

- Re-title the manuscript

The manuscript has been re-titled: ‘… a feasibility study’ instead of ‘… an exploratory study’ (pg 1 of the revised version). Furthermore, the manuscript has been screened for using ‘exploratory study’ as well, which was changed by ‘feasibility study’.

- Lack of significant medical history information

Mean time with the ICD device, shock history and primary diagnosis of the ICD patients were added to the Patients Characteristics section (pg 10/11 of the revised version).

- Emphasize the feasibility aspects vs. trying to sell the data too hard

The feasibility aspects of the study have been emphasized in the Discussion section. First, the feasibility aspects are discussed in more detail (pg 13/14). Second, the programme benefits are mentioned shortly (pg 14, lines 7-10). The Conclusions section is changed as well, by emphasizing the feasibility aspects more (pg 15, lines 1-5).

Concerns Referee 2 (Dr. Lorig):

- Re-title the manuscript
The manuscript has been re-titled: ‘Nurse- and peer-led self-management programme…’ instead of ‘Nurse-led self-management programme…’ (pg 1 of the revised version).

- Give effect sizes for the changes in outcomes

We agree with Referee 2 that reporting effect sizes does give a clear view of the effect of the programme. However, as the small-scale approach of this study did not allow us to test for statistical inferences, reporting effect sizes does not seem very appropriate. Furthermore, it is doubtful what these effect sizes really mean, given the small sample size. Therefore, although we considered this option thoroughly, we finally have decided not to present effect sizes in this study.

- Shorten the manuscript

We critically reviewed the full text of the manuscript from this perspective and despite adding several additional remarks as requested by the Referees, the total number of words of the text is reduced from 3860 to 3446 (excluding abstract, references and tables).

- Conclusions are a bit optimistic

The conclusions are changed, by emphasizing the feasibility aspects more (pg 15, lines 1-6).

We hope the response to the concerns is sufficient and that you will consider our paper for publication in BMC Nursing.

On behalf of the co-authors,

sincerely,

Esther S.T.F. Smeulders, MSc

Maastricht University, Faculty of Health Sciences