Reviewer's report

Title: Integrating the promotion of physical activity within a smoking cessation programme: Findings from collaborative action research in UK stop smoking services.

Version: 1 Date: 26 January 2010

Reviewer: Wendy Gnich

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Minor essential revisions

1. The introduction is well written but would benefit from some re-structuring from the paragraph beginning ‘The challenge then is to develop…’ For example, an additional heading indicating that the paper is moving from literature review to ‘the purpose of the reported work’ would add clarity.

2. The next paragraph (5th in the introduction) begins ‘in the survey’ – this ‘familiarity’ is repeated later in the paragraph. The reader requires further explanation of the context of this work!

3. Present actual p values not p<0.05.

4. Results Phase 2 Paragraph 1 – confusing findings in relation to item score for perceived cons of promoting PA (significant) and later – cons for promoting PA (not significant)? The difference between the two measures could be clarified.

Major compulsory revisions

1. Abstract – It would be beneficial to state upfront that this article does not explore the impact of PA promotion within the SSS on engagement with services or smoking outcomes rather it explores the feasibility of developing and embedding physical activity promotion in SSS.

2. Conclusion (abstract and main article) currently states that PA was included in the SSS with ‘no apparent distraction’ from the clients attempt to quit. I do not think this statement can be completely evidenced by the data presented in the paper. The authors should be more cautious in making this assertion as the number of clients who completed a questionnaire at T2 highlighted substantial drop-out and there was no exploration of impact on cessation attempts.

3. The substantial drop-out rate at T2 requires further acknowledgment and discussion of how this may have impacted on findings. (72 clients at T1 to 23 at T2). If possible comparable data on drop-out rates for this service prior to SSS or other comparable services without the introduction of PA as a cessation aid should be presented and discussed. Without this information presented it could in fact be the PA intervention had a part to play in low retention rates?
4. Related to point 3 above: The authors need to be explicit about what was meant by the ‘intent to treat’ analysis – a term coined in clinical trials- it is often misused in the literature.

5. The representativeness of the SSS, the client sample and the relatively small number of advisors needs further acknowledgment and consideration in terms of drawing conclusions. For example from an inequalities angle – what kind of areas did these clients come from? What was there socio-economic status etc. More contextual information is required on where the SSS were based. Reference to South Birmingham clinics much later in the paper with no – geographical info upfront.

6. More could be made of the qualitative data gathered to back up process findings re feasibility. At present comments are presented in a table for illustrative purposes but there is limited thematic analysis and presentation of quotes to directly support process findings.

7. Discussion page 13: The authors state: ‘Where a structured exercise programme may require…cognitive overload for quitters.’ The results do not actually indicate this/provide evidence for this statement- if this pertains to evidence found elsewhere in the literature – reference needs to be made.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.