Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of a self-management programme for congestive heart failure patients: design of a randomised controlled trial [ISRCTN88363287]

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear editors,

Enclosed you will find the paper "Evaluation of a self-management programme for congestive heart failure patients: design of a randomised controlled trial" [ISRCTN88363287] which we would like to submit for publication in BMC Health Services Research. We state that the content of this manuscript has not been submitted for publication to any other journal.

The manuscript presents the study protocol of a multi-centre randomised controlled trial, evaluating the long-term effectiveness of a structured self-management programme (Chronic Disease Self-Management Programme, Lorig et al.) among congestive heart failure outpatients in the Netherlands. The manuscript is innovative as it concerns the first evaluation study of the programme specific among congestive heart failure patients. In addition, this group-based cognitive behavioural intervention emphasizes the patients' central role and responsibility in managing their illness, which seems crucial for dealing with congestive heart failure in an acceptable way.

This trial has received a grant from a major funding body; the Netherlands Heart Foundation (project number: 2002B005). Approval to conduct this trial was granted by the Medical Ethics Committee of Maastricht University/ University Hospital Maastricht responsible for supervision of the study (MEC number: 03-231-5). Local feasibility of the study design was additionally assessed in each other participating hospital as well. All significant documents concerning the ethics approval and funding procedures are available.

We hope that you will consider our paper for publication in BMC Health Services Research.

On behalf of the co-authors,
sincerely,

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