Reviewer’s report

Title: The Internet for weight control in an obese sample: results of a randomised controlled trial

Version: 2 Date: 27 April 2007

Reviewer: Cliona Ni Mhurchu

Reviewer’s report:

General

Overall the authors have made most of the suggested revisions and have produced a more informative paper as a result.

There is one outstanding issue, which is their misinterpretation of the term "Intention to treat" analysis (see below for details).

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The authors appear to have misinterpreted the term "Intention To Treat" (ITT). This is a strategy for the analysis of randomised controlled trials that compares patients in the groups to which they were originally randomly assigned. It is generally interpreted as including all patients, regardless of treatment actually received and subsequent withdrawal or deviation from the protocol.

In contrast the authors define ITT as "where all available data were used" (page 8), an approach that is often known as a "per protocol" analysis and which tends to inflate positive findings. Since the primary analysis used the latter approach references to a primary ITT analysis should be removed from the abstract and results (page 10).

In fact, what the authors describe as "sensitivity" or "secondary" analyses using LOCF and BOFC to account for missing values (pages 8 and 10) is, in fact, an ITT analysis. As such, an alternative approach would be to report the LOCF or BOFC data as the primary analysis and the "all available data" as the secondary analysis. Such a change in approach would mean the results currently presented in the abstract (1.3 vs 1.9 kg weight loss), results and figures would need to amended.

1st paragraph, page 14: Remove "REF" after Reference 29.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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