Author’s response to reviews

Title: The effects of an area-based intervention on the uptake of maternal and child health assessments in Australia

Authors:

M Kelaher (mkelaher@unimelb.edu.au)
D Dunt (d.dunt@unimelb.edu.au)
P Feldman (feldmanp@unimelb.edu.au)
A Nolan (andrea.nolan@deakin.edu.au)
B Raban (b.raban@unimleb.edu.au)

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We would like to thank the reviewers for their comments and apologise for the delay in responding. All of the reviewers comments have been addressed.

The point about the feasibility of randomisation (#1 in my original comments) was a general one which I thought worth referring to. Clearly it was not feasible in this case and the addition made by the authors in the methods is, I think, potentially confusing. If it is to be included (which was my recommendation) then I think it is better placed in the discussion. If the authors disagree, that is fine, but they might set out, for my benefit and that of the editors, the basis of that disagreement.

The comment about randomization has been moved to the discussion.

Background para 2
I suggested including the more recent evaluation of Surestart as well because it shows contrasting findings to those reported in the early evaluation. Thus without the subsequent evaluation included, para 2 is out of date. The most recent evaluation has now been reported in the peer reviewed literature. I recommend it is included (which would require some revision of the para).
Melhuish E, Belsky J, Leyland AH, Barnes J, National Evaluation of Sure Start Research Team.
Thanks for pointing this out. The paragraph has been modified.
Minor point
The sentence in the discussion on targeted versus population approaches needs changing to refer to these as either singular or plural (last 3 lines para 4 of discussion)

Paragraph has been edited.