Author’s response to reviews

Title: Barriers encountered during enrollment in an internet-mediated randomized controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
We respectfully disagree with reviewer #2 who suggests that “a central premise of our manuscript is that the generation of help tickets influenced ultimate enrollment into the trial.”

There are actually a number of different reasons why a person might not generate any tickets.

1. The person might not have any questions.
2. The person might not be interested in the program after reading about it.
3. The person might have questions, but not enough motivation to pursue getting answers.

Because the group of non-ticket generators is heterogeneous and because we have no way to sort them into more meaningful categories, comparing non-ticket generators to ticket generators is risky.

Instead, the central assumption can be reframed as “it is likely that those who encountered barriers and submitted tickets experienced a similar range of barriers as those encountered barriers but who chose not to submit tickets.”

If this assumption is true then the tickets we did analyze describe a close approximation of a representative sample of the barriers that all potential participants faced. This is not a testable hypothesis. However, we think it is a reasonable assumption.

Results of the logistic regressions requested by reviewer #2 are below:

```
. ***** Did ticket generation influence randomization status

. gen ticketsyn = cond(numtickets>0,1,0)

. local controls rage sex cad dia bmi

. logistic randomized numtickets `controls'

Logistic regression Number of obs = 706
LR chi2(6) = 170.23
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Log likelihood = -401.86389 Pseudo R2 = 0.1748

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
randomized | Odds Ratio  Std. Err.     z    P>|z|    [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+-----------------------------------------------------------------
numtickets  |   2.710915  .2670557  10.12  0.000  2.234925  3.288281
rate        |  1.006224  .007524   0.83  0.407   .9915846  1.021079
sex         |  1.449625  .2791122  1.93  0.054  .9939496  2.114204
cad         |  1.363639  .3773162  1.12  0.262   .7928182  2.345445
dia         |  1.306590  .2877828  1.21  0.225   .848512   2.011966
bmi         |  1.030766  .0135108   2.31  0.021  1.004623  1.05759
------------------------------------------------------------------------------

. logistic randomized ticketsyn `controls'

Logistic regression Number of obs = 706
LR chi2(6) = 166.82
```
As you can see from the logistic regressions, it appears that those who submitted more tickets were more likely to end up randomized than those who did not and those who submitted any tickets were more likely to end up randomized than those who did not submit any tickets. It is likely that this simply means that those who submitted tickets were more highly motivated and proactive than those who did not submit tickets and thus were more likely to end up randomized. We have added a sentence about this result to the end of the first paragraph in the results section though we are a bit skeptical about how meaningful it is.