Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 28 May 2009

Reviewer: Fiona Simpson

Reviewer's report:

Thank-you for sending this paper to me to review. This is a very interesting topic.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1a. Table 1: Column titled ‘generated help tickets’ – In table 1, could you please explain why the numbers for the ‘generated help tickets’ column are 331 and not 623 as discussed in the body of the manuscript.

1b. Could the authors please expand the results section of the manuscript to better clarify the above point for the end reader.

Minor Essential Revisions
2. In your manuscript, please describe the method used to randomize subjects into the main clinical trial.

3. Was any stratification used during the randomization process? If so, please specify this in the manuscript.

4. When referring to the free one-year membership to Walking Spree, in the acknowledgements section it is evident this was awarded on completion of the 16-week study intervention. Please add this information to the methods section of the manuscript.

5. Main Clinical Trial Recruitment section: In the manuscript, please describe which eligibility criteria was self reported by participants and which was obtained from other sources. For example, the Michigan clinical data warehouse appears to have been used to identify patients with certain medical conditions such as type 2 diabetes. Was it also used to determine patient age? Did participants self report walking capabilities etc.

6. Enrollment Process for Main Clinical Trial section: The authors have nicely described how participants were blinded with regard to the pedometer. Please describe in the manuscript whether any other blinding was undertaken in the main trial. If blinding was undertaken, please describe who was blinded and how this was achieved.

7. Enrollment Process for Main Clinical Trial section: Was the baseline survey completed online? If so, please add this to the manuscript.

8. Intercoder Reliability and Data Analysis for Substudy: What was your cut-point to determine statistical significance? Please specify this in your manuscript.
9. Intercoder Reliability and Data Analysis for Substudy: Please remove the inter-rater reliability result (0.80) and place this in the results section.

10. Table 1: Please change the column titled ‘screened’ to ‘completed on-line screening enrollment’ or similar wording.

11. Table 1: Column titled ‘consented’ – Please explain in the body of the manuscript why the numbers for this column are 473 as this is not clear from the results section of the manuscript.

12. Table 1: Column titled ‘randomized’ – please change the title of the column to ‘successfully randomized into the trial’ or similar.

Discretionary Revisions

13. Enrollment Process for Main Clinical Trial section: In the sentence beginning “Next if a potential patient”..please consider changing ‘was eligible’ to met eligibility criteria.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare i have no competing interests.