Reviewer's report

Title: A self-management program for employees with complaints of the arm, shoulder and/or neck (CANS); design of a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 1 May 2013

Reviewer: Kelli Allen

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the background section, 6th paragraph (beginning "Work-related factors) is may be better if woven into the prior paragraph.

2. Also in the background section, the 9th paragraph seems a bit out of place. The prior paragraphs addre mutli-component interventions, then this paragraph goes back to the point of the burden of CANS. It should either be moved earlier in the background or woven into the discussion proximal to it.

3. It would be helpful to provide just a bit more description of the "intervention mapping" process, either in the background or methods section. This will give readers a more thorough idea of how the intervention was adapted.

4. Spell out SMART and VBBA the first times they are used.

5. Secondary outcomes: rather than having a lot of paragraphs with 1 or 2 sentence, combine into paragraphs with meaningful groupings.

6. Secondary outcomes: it is not clear why there is no description of measures for "use of usual care, sports activities....” in the last paragraph. Even if these were measures developed specifically for the study, it would be helpful to state so and to provide bit more information on what each measures.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 that I have no competing interests.