Reviewer's report

Title: Psychodynamic Motivation and Training Program (PMT) for the secondary prevention in patients with stable coronary heart disease: A randomized controlled trial of feasibility and effects

Version: 1 Date: 22 August 2013

Reviewer: Lorenzo Ghiadoni

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This study aims to examine the feasibility and effects of a Psychodynamic Motivation and Training Program (PMT) as compared to one session of advice in exercise training (EX) and treatment as usual (TAU) by randomizing 90 patients with stable coronary heart disease and a physically inactive lifestyle to the three groups. The primary outcome is the change in the individual anaerobic threshold as determined by spiroergometry from baseline to 6-month follow-up. Secondary endpoints include change in endothelial function, biomarkers of inflammation and oxidative stress, quality of life, symptoms of fatigue, and illness perception and feasibility of the treatment approach.

The hypothesis is novel and intriguing. The study is well designed and outcomes are well focused. However, PMT as well EX has important effect on blood pressure. Thus, this outcome seems underestimated. Thus, the authors should discuss on clinic blood pressure values as a confounder in the analysis of results and the lack of use of other methods (home or ambulatory blood pressure) The should also include in the discussion the possible bias of psychopharmacotherapy initiated during the trial and the limitation represented by the lack of assessment of endothelium-independent vasodilation.