Author's response to reviews

Title: Telephone-based health coaching for chronically ill patients: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Thank you for considering our manuscript “Telephone-based health coaching for chronically ill patients: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial” for publication in BMC Trials.

Please find attached our revised manuscript.

We addressed all of the reviewer’s comments and the editorial requests.

Reviewer’s comments:

1) General remark: As you report an ongoing trial the tense should consistently either be present or future.

   We asked a native speaker to correct the manuscript and also corrected the grammatical tense to future.

2) Methods: Please provide some more details on the risk prediction you use to identify patients (commercial software? statistics used?)

   As the risk prediction model is rather complex we asked the responsible statistician to provide more information for the model. We added that information to the manuscript on page 4 under “sample procedures”.

3) Methods: Please clarify from which index admission you start to assess your primary outcome “time to first readmission” (e.g. could this event have been occured before inclusion in the study?)

   We clarified the dates of the primary outcome in the section “Primary Outcome” on page 6 to make clear that the time until hospital readmission is counted from the date of the enrollment in the study. Therefore hospital readmission before the baseline is impossible.

4) Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
We asked a native speaker to revise the manuscript. The changes are highlighted.

Editorial requests:

1) Please mention each author individually in your Authors’ Contributions section. At present Dr Matthias Eckardt is missing. We suggest the following kind of format (please use initials to refer to each author's contribution)?

   Dr. Eckardt contributed to the health economical part of the study. I acknowledged this in the Contributions section.

2) Please include a figure title and legend section after the reference list. The figures should not be included in the main body of the manuscript.

   We included this part in the manuscript. The figure is attached as additional file. In the text we marked the location of the figure on page 5.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

We are looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sarah Dwinger and Jörg Dirmaier (on behalf of all authors)