Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 15 September 2013

Reviewer: Tobias Freund

Reviewer's report:

Dwinger et al. report on a study protocol of a randomized controlled trial of telephone-based health coaching for chronically ill patients. The topic is of high relevance for chronic care services in Germany and internationally. Therefore it can be expected that the results of this study will significantly contribute to evidence in this area. The study protocol is well written overall. However, some minor revision are expected to be addressed prior to publication of the protocol in Trials:

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

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

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 occurred before inclusion in the study?)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

No conflict of interest