Author's response to reviews

Title: Piloting a manualised weight management programme (Shape Up-LD) for overweight and obese persons with mild-moderate learning disabilities: Study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
24 January 2013

Professor Curt D. Furberg
Trials
c/o BioMed Central
236 Gray's Inn Road
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United Kingdom

Dear Professor Curt D. Furberg

Please find enclosed the revised manuscript: 1471550772818188

Piloting a manualised weight management programme (Shape Up-LD) for overweight and obese persons with mild-moderate learning disabilities: Study protocol for a pilot randomized controlled trial

by Rebecca J Beeken, Dimitrios Spanos, Sally Fovargue, Rachael Hunter, Rumana Omar, Angela Hassiotis, Michael King, Jane Wardle, Helen Croker, to be submitted as an original protocol to Trials.

The manuscript has been amended in line with the Editor’s and referee’s comments and as authors we feel it has been improved. The minor changes we have made are shown highlighted throughout the manuscript. In addition, detailed responses to the reviewer comments are provided with this letter alongside the page number for each change. We have also made a change to the wording of our acknowledgments (highlighted on page 21) in response to a request from our funders.

We look forward to your thoughts and hope that these changes are sufficient to merit publication in Trials.

Sincerely yours,

Dimitrios Spanos on behalf of the authors
Trial Manager
Working days: Mon-Wed
Obesity Specialist Dietician

Reviewer’s comment 1:

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- It would be helpful to insert in the exclusion criteria section - how you intend to evaluate severe learning disability - presumably it will be a score on the Ability and Development Scale.

Authors’ response:
The authors have added in the exclusion criteria section (page 8) that severe learning disability will be assessed with the use of the Ability and Development Scale. The added explanation is highlighted.

Reviewer’s comment 2:
- I would assume there is some underlying theory to the intervention that is being piloted - given it aims to change behaviour using behavioural techniques. Being explicit about the theoretical basis of the intervention would strengthen the potential for prediction and explanation.

Authors’ response:
The authors have added the following paragraph to page 10:

Shape Up is based on two theories; i) “social cognitive theory” [26] and ii) “control theory” [27]. The intervention focuses on the concepts of self-control, self-efficacy and emotional coping responses. Behavioural techniques introduced in week 5 (and practiced throughout the subsequent weeks of the intervention) will include self-monitoring with the use of food and physical activity diaries, relapse prevention, assertiveness, and goal setting.

Reviewer’s comment 3:
- There is minimal detail about how the qualitative analysis will be undertaken. A little more information about the thematic analysis is required.

Authors’ response:
The authors have added detail on the interviews themselves to page 16 and the following paragraph specific to the analysis has been added to page 18:

All interviews will be audio recorded, anonymised and transcribed verbatim. The qualitative data software analysis package NVivo will be used to organise the transcripts and analyse the data. A thematic analysis will be used to identify the main themes that will form the basis of our results. The procedure of coding and development of a thematic map will be based on the recommendations of Braun & Clarke [43].
Editorial requests:

1) Title: please ensure the title conforms to journal style for study protocol articles. The title should follow the format ?___________: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial.? 

Authors’ response:

The authors have changed the title to follow the journal’s guidelines

Piloting a manualised weight management programme (Shape Up-LD) for overweight and obese persons with mild-moderate learning disabilities: Study protocol for a pilot randomized controlled trial