Author's response to reviews

Title: A pragmatic cluster randomised trial of a tailored intervention for implementing recommendations for managing depressed elderly patients in primary care: Protocol

Authors:

Eivind Aakhus (eivind.aakhus@gmail.com)
Ingeborg Granlund (ingeborg.granlund@gmail.com)
Jan Odgaard-Jensen (jan.odgaard-jensen@kunnskapssenteret.no)
Michel Wensing (M.Wensing@iq.umcn.nl)
Andrew D Oxman (oxman@online.no)
Signe A Flottorp (signe.flottorp@kunnskapssenteret.no)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Covering letter after review

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To the editor

Trials

Dear Sir/Madam

Please accept the attached revised protocol to review for publication in your journal.

We thank professor Siriwardena for his valuable comments, and have made amendments in accordance with his review:

Erratum: In the text 54 implementation interventions are mentioned, whereas in the appendix B (Logic model) only 52 are listed. We have corrected the number in the text to 52.

- Editor’s comments: "In addition to the reviewer’s comments, it is important for the authors to follow the SPIRIT guideline (not CONSORT guideline).
  - The article is, to our knowledge, written in accordance with the SPIRIT check list and the Trials’ standards

- Editorial requests
  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.?
  - Title is changed

Reviewer’s comments:

- In the ‘implementation program’ some of the work to develop the intervention, e.g. surveys is touched upon but not referenced, presumably because the work is not yet published.
  - That is correct. Results from work package 2 and 3 in the TICD project which lead to the intervention in WP4 is not published yet. The intervention was planned in accordance with a standardised protocol for all countries that participate in the TICD project.

- My main concern is about the primary outcome measure, which is through interview of GPs to obtain information for up to six included patients (fitting inclusion/exclusion criteria), about the proportion of recommendations that are implemented by the GPs. This self-report from intervention GPs as to whether they followed the recommendations for each patient has the potential for acquiescence bias. There could be a brief paragraph in the discussion about potential biases and how the investigators will seek to address these.
  - We would agree if the primary outcome had been based solely on self-report by GP. The primary outcome is mainly based on data from the GPs’ electronic medical record however. We have included the requested paragraph in the discussion section. We will, more than ask the GP whether they followed the recommendation or not, ask them how they practiced regarding the six patients and thus check if they followed the recommendation.

1. Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published.
a. We have reviewed the text and corrected any typographical errors and misspelling that we were able to identify.

The authors of the protocol are:

Eivind Aakhus¹ mail: eivind.aakhus@gmail.com (corresponding author)
Ingeborg Granlund² mail: ingeborg.granlund@gmail.com
Jan Odgaard-Jensen² mail: jan.odgaard-jensen@kunnskapssenteret.no
Michel Wensing³ mail: M.Wensing@iq.umcn.nl
Andrew D Oxman² mail: oxman@online.no
Signe A Flottorp²,⁴ mail: signe.flottorp@kunnskapssenteret.no

¹ Research Centre for Old Age Psychiatry, Innlandet Hospital Trust, N-2312 Ottestad
² Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, Box 7004 St Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo
³ Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre, P.O. Box 9102, 6500 HC Nijmegen, The Netherlands
⁴ The Department of Health Management and Health Economics, University of Oslo, P.O box 1130 Blindern, 0318 Oslo, Norway

The authors declare no competing interests.

Please note that the “additional material file” contains several appendices, including the Logic Model, which will be used in all protocols in this series.

Kind regards

Eivind Aakhus, corresponding author