Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 25 October 2013

Reviewer: Aloysius Niroshan Siriwardena

Reviewer's report:

Major comments

This is a large pragmatic cluster randomised controlled trial (CRT) of a complex intervention for care of depression (ICD-10) in elderly patients living at home in Norway. The complex intervention package includes interventions at municipality, practices, GP and via GPs to patients. Clusters are therefore at the level of the municipality and outcomes are measured at the level of the GP.

The study is well designed and follows the CONSORT guidance for CRTs.

The authors describe current care in Norway in the background. In the ‘background’ section under ‘usual care’, is there evidence from Norway that than antidepressant medication is used in preference to psychological therapies.

They describe how the intervention was developed through the ‘tailored interventions Tailored Implementation for Chronic Diseases (TICD) project and checklist.

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.

A logic model is described in which a total of 54 strategies, addressing one or several determinants will be implemented under six domains and the detailed logic model is provided in the supplementary material.

The statistical analysis is well described and includes a power calculation and ICCs based on a previous study.

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.
Minor essential revisions

There are a number of minor typos in the text which will presumably be corrected at the editing stage.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No.