Reviewer’s report

Title: Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a group-based pain self-management intervention for patients undergoing total hip replacement: feasibility study for a randomised controlled trial

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Reviewer: David Beard

Reviewer’s report:

The paper reports the findings of a feasibility study to assess the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of pain self-management for hip replacement patients. This aim is laudable. This area is interesting and research is needed. As expected (for this capable group) the paper is well ordered and very nicely written. There are no issues with rigour or attention to appropriate detail. The report is neither verbose nor lacking in granularity. I am a firm believer that sort of work should be disseminated at some level to help the development of clinical trials in surgery. I would therefore support publication.

However, my one minor criticism is that the paper, as it stands, does not offer any unique methodological aspect or substantial insight into general feasibility for a trial of this type. What it does show (and very well) is that 1. feasibility studies for trials with humans are essential (we already know this – hence the conduct/completion of this feasibility trial - especially for this type of intervention). 2. the location of delivery for any self-help intervention is important (again intuitive), and 3. there is some disparity in acceptance between those that do not wish to engage and those taking part (i.e. those who found the course very useful). I suspect that this is also expected (and not really a new finding). Hence, the overall impact of the paper could be questioned by those with an agenda. It could be seen as merely getting something out of some rather distressing findings (i.e. that the intervention looks to be unworkable as it presently stands - but this is important information in itself). The report is certainly critical for NIHR purposes, but could be argued perhaps less so for the wider community.

The paper is certainly acceptable as is and is enjoyable to read, but I wonder if the authors might consider focusing or emphasising just one aspect to make it a little less mundane and obvious. Is there anything novel that the feasibility highlighted that could be further drawn out? (Although they may have done all they can!). I suspect that a higher level journal such as Trials may be looking for such “colour” or a unique methodological slant. That said, the quality of the research in itself is certainly sufficient for publication and I would not allow my comments, intended to only enhance/improve the impact of the work, prevent publication.

One writing error noticed.
P9. “in conjugation with a physiotherapist,”
I believe this should be in “conjunction”!

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests