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

Version: 1
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Reviewer: Ashley Jones

Reviewer’s report:

Comments

1) The title of the study states that the study that has been conducted is a feasibility study, I would question this and based on the definition of a feasibility study and a pilot study as described by Arain I would think this is a pilot study (What is a pilot or feasibility study? A review of current practice and editorial policy BMC Medical Research Methodology 2010, 10:67), I would also suggest that this reference is added to the bibliography.

2) The extremely poor consent rate raises a number of interesting questions which could be discussed further:
   a. Is the method of identifying potential patients the most suitable?
   b. Do the patient information sheets that were sent out need to be changed in any way?
   c. How generalizable are the results given that such a large percentage of participants refused to take part?
   d. How many participants were contacted who did not wish to take part?

3) Has there been a systematic review of the previous existing evidence? Does there need to be? It seems with several trials that one is warranted.

4) I think the introduction needs more structure and some of the information reported here is not required and some is repeated.

5) I was surprised to see that there was no objective to estimate parameters for a sample size calculation. Has this information already been collected? This should be discussed as this is one of the key pieces of information for any future trial.

6) There was also nothing with regards to developing core outcomes, are all the outcomes in this are well established? (see Williamson PR, Altman DG, Blazeby JM, Clarke M, Devane D, Gargon E, Tugwell P: Developing core outcome sets for clinical trials: issues to consider. Trials 2012, 13:132.)

7) This pilot study was conducted in only one centre, how generalizable are the results to other centres?

8) Further information needed on the randomisation procedure.

9) For baseline characteristics would means and standard deviations be a more appropriate way of describing the parametric data.
10) Page 10, for the 37 females, could a percentage be given.

11) The retention of participants section should refer to the consort diagram. It would be more useful if the withdrawal reasons were split by group.

12) The high amounts of missing data and the low retentions rates of the intervention suggest that this method is not suitable or needs to be changed considerably to be rolled out in a larger trial. I don’t think this is discussed in enough detail.

13) There are high amounts of missing economic data, again suggesting that this is not feasible or worthwhile yet the authors do not seem to agree?

14) There are no discussion on completeness of particular outcomes within the questionnaire, just the return of the questionnaire themselves, were all questionnaires that were returned 100% complete?

15) The discussion describes the barriers that were faced in a constructive manner but does not discuss whether or not a future trial is actually manageable and if so what should be the key objectives of such a trial.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

None to declare