Author's response to reviews

Title: The GOALS study: study protocol for a randomised controlled trial of a brief CBT intervention to promote recovery in people with psychosis and comorbid anxiety or depression

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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RE: MS 1728185501220704; The GOALS study: study protocol for a randomised controlled trial of a brief CBT intervention to promote recovery in people with psychosis and comorbid anxiety or depression

Thank you very much for the comments on the paper. We have addressed all of the points which were raised below and have tracked these changes on an amended version of the paper. We hope you will find these meet your requirements.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Helen Waller
GOALS Study Coordinator
Editorial requests:

1. Please include the date of registration with your trial registration number at the end of your Abstract.

The date of registration (20/2/13) has been added to the abstract on page 3.

2. Please mention each author individually in your Authors’ Contribution section. Currently ‘SJ’ is missing.

SJ’s contribution has now been added to page 16:

‘SJ is the lead for patient and public involvement in the study.’

Reviewer’s Comments:

1. Is the GOALS manual published or available on request by the authors?

The GOALS manual is not yet published or available on request, as we are still in the process of testing and refining the manual. We have added a line to the discussion on page 15:

‘The study also aims to finalise the training curriculum and the treatment manual, which we intend to publish and make available in electronic form in future.’

2. The economic health is not mentioned until the method section, please include this as an objective of the study (abstract, introduction)

This is now included on pages 2 (abstract) and 6 (introduction).

3. What is the educational background of the staff providing the treatment, and what training did they receive? Will the GOALS treatment be supervised or monitored to ensure the quality of the treatment?

We have added further information to clarify these queries. On page 5 we have clarified the length of the training and supervision. We have also added the professional backgrounds of the staff involved in training, which implicitly gives an indication of educational qualifications:

‘Staff will be from a range of professional backgrounds, including nursing, occupational therapy and psychology (assistants) and are likely to have little or no previous experience in delivering CBT-based therapy.’

We have also aimed to clarify the steps we are taking to ensure the quality of the treatment. We have added a line on page 5 to highlight that one aim of case supervision is also to ensure fidelity to the treatment protocol:

‘…case supervision from a clinical psychologist in order to provide ongoing support and to ensure fidelity to the treatment protocol’.

Further, on page 10 we have aimed to clarify that the process of assessing therapist empathy and fidelity from audio-recordings is to establish the quality of treatment delivery:

‘Additionally, in order to assess the quality of treatment delivery, audio-recordings of three therapy sessions (early, middle and later sessions) for each participant will be rated by expert supervisors for therapist empathy using the Therapist Empathy Measure [29] and therapist fidelity to the protocol.’