Reviewer's report

Title: A randomized trial to compare the feasibility, acceptability, clinical- and cost-effectiveness of mental health e-screening compared to paper-based screening on the detection of depression, anxiety, and psychosocial risk in pregnant women: Study protocol

Version: 3 Date: 22 November 2013

Reviewer: Sally Merry

Reviewer's report:

This protocol describes a study to compare paper-based and e-screening for post-natal depression and social risk factors. The study will address an important area, it is well designed and has been well thought through. The description of the study processes is excellent. The power of the study has been carefully considered and allocation concealment assured. Statistical analyses are appropriate. I have only a few points for consideration by the authors.

Minor discretionary
As I understand it, the design you have undertaken to ensure allocation concealment and blinding appears to rely entirely on your participants following the process correctly, i.e. they will received the information about the allocation, and will then fill in the questionnaires on the tablet or on paper, and will return these to the study team who will be blind to the participants’ allocation. There does not seem to be any check to ensure that they have followed instructions correctly. I can envisage some participants deciding not to follow instructions for example if they would rather fill in the questionnaire on the tablet than on paper, or simply getting it wrong. It would seem to be relatively easy to run a computerised check to ensure the participants are in the correct group, or to run a manual check (perhaps by the research coordinator) on a subset to check the error rate. While I expect any violations would be small in number, it would strengthen the study to be able to address this definitively.

Minor essential
The title does not have all the details of your design, as recommended in the SPIRIT guidelines e.g. parallel group, superiority

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 declare that I have no competing interests