Reviewer’s report

Title: A pilot randomised controlled trial of a Telehealth intervention in patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Version: 2 Date: 27 May 2014

Reviewer: Zainab Samaan

Reviewer’s comments

The authors describe a pilot RCT investigating the use of telehealth intervention in chronic disorder to assist in improving caseload management and engaging patients in their healthcare. The primary goal of the pilot RCT is to assess the potential for a full RCT testing the effectiveness of telehealth compared to standard care to reduce re-admission rates and improve quality of life.

Overall, this is well written manuscript and has the potential to disseminate important challenges associated with complex health care delivery method to an increasing number of patients with chronic diseases (not just COPD) and ageing population. This manuscript has been revised based on reviewers’ comments as seen in the cover letter.

Specific comments

Minor Essential revisions:

1. Study context: In the first line, please define PCT, I assume it is Primary Care Trust

2. "It was recognized that a service which was delivered entirely face to face was unsustainable in the long term" this statement came without a substantial evidence as the services of face to face delivery was started in 2009 (5 years ago), it would be helpful to audit the service and test the sustainability of continuing the service.

3. “Doc@Home”: what is the cost of using this service? How easy it is for patients to use? How reliable are the vital signs monitoring using this system?

4. Data collection: first point “statistical team to author CB for each participant”, please define CB.

5. Data collection, point 5, demographic information: please replace “gender” a social construct with sex.
6. The pilot study conclusions. The authors concluded that the full RCT is not feasible based on the current pilot experience. From my reading of the manuscript, it seems that the “Standard Care” is a promising model of care, the collection of research data by clinicians is unadvisable and a dedicated research person is needed to ensure data collection according to protocol and finally patients with COPD and assumed other chronic disorders are in favour of face to face contact. It is also possible that the generation of the participants is not technologically inclined. Suggest these points to be included in the discussion. In addition, 40% of patients failed to qualify for the trial based on eligibility criteria making this pilot trial more explanatory and less pragmatic in design.

**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