Reviewer's report

**Title:** Protocol for a pilot randomized controlled trial of transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) for treatment of major depression during pregnancy

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 18 August 2014

**Reviewer:** Tara Donker

**Reviewer's report:**

The current paper describes a protocol of a pilot RCT, in which the authors will investigate the feasibility, acceptability and adherence, and depression outcome of transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) for the treatment of depression in pregnant women. The manuscript is timely, well written and has importance to the field, since depression is highly prevalent among pregnant women and associated with a high burden of disease, with flow on effects on children, while the current therapies have side-effects or do not result in substantive improvements. As this protocol has already received funding and has undergone peer review, only the following points are considered: 1) sufficient details to allow replication and 2) whether the writing is acceptable. I can confirm that the writing is acceptable and that sufficient details are provided to allow for replication, if the following additional comments are incorporated in the manuscript:

**Minor Essential Revisions**

1. Background: please add information about the effect sizes of tDCS from previous studies, and effect sizes of the current available treatment options for depressed pregnant women (anti-depressant medication and psychotherapy).
2. Which diagnostic instrument will be used to assess DSM-5 MDD diagnosis?
3. Please add information about the background/training of assessors
4. Please add psychometric properties when describing the included measurements (reliability, validity coefficients).
5. Please ensure the title conforms to journal style for study protocol articles.
6. Please include all author affiliations and email addresses on your title page.
7. Please include the date of registration with your trial registration number at the end of your Abstract.
8. Please move your funding information to the Acknowledgements.
9. Please only cite published or in press articles or remove the Walton et al. 2014 reference.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
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