Reviewer's report

Title: Mobile phone text messaging for promoting adherence to anti-tuberculosis treatment in patients with tuberculosis: a systematic review protocol

Version: 1 Date: 11 October 2012

Reviewer: Lawrence Mbuagbaw

Reviewer's report:

This is an important review which will provide much needed evidence on the use of mobile phone technology to improve adherence to TB treatment.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. No mention is made of other SMS interventions used to improve adherence. That should be the main justification for trying to use it in TB (because it works in other diseases) not because it has great (undocumented) potential.

2. The authors wish to include non randomized studies in their review, yet make no mention of how they will assess their quality or if they intend to pool their data with that from RCTs. I would suggest that they focus on RCTs and include other designs only if they don't find enough RCTs.

3. The search period is not specified for electronic databases or conferences.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Is the study design appropriate?

The methods are appropriate with some limitations:

a. The intervention of interest is not described in detail including the possible variations.

2. Are sufficient details provided to allow replication of the work or comparison with related analyses: if not, what is missing?

Partially

a. As mentioned above the time limits to the search or who will conduct it are not mentioned.

b. Agreement between authors is not going to be measured at multiple levels.

3. Is the planned statistical analysis appropriate?

Yes, but will benefit from more detail for clarity.

a. No mention is made of variables that will be reported on a different scale.

b. It is assumed that all variables are dichotomous. This cannot be true. If the authors wish to dichotomize all their data they should specify.

c. The specific variables that will be used for subgroup analysis should be specified and justified.
d. For sensitivity analysis the key interest for readers will be whether the different study designs give different results. They can also use the fixed vs random-effects as a sensitivity analysis.

4. Is the writing acceptable?
Mostly, it is easy to understand and flows well.

a. Many parts of the document require better referencing: GRADE, Kappa, Endnote 9.0, Revman.

b. Some comments are included in the attached pdf file.

Additional resources:
The authors can use these references to see the different ways in which text messaging can be used and sent in other diseases.


**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'