Reviewer's report

Title: Is health literacy related to health behaviors and cell phone usage patterns among the text4baby target population? A sample survey in 2 WIC clinics

Version: 1 Date: 22 December 2013

Reviewer: Remo Ostini

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

This manuscript reports a competent piece of work on a modest component of a larger study. The main question, of course, is whether the mhealth intervention improved health behaviours - but that isn't the focus of this manuscript.

The focus of this manuscript, on the relationships between WIC attendees' health literacy and their health behaviours and mobile phone usage, would be strengthened if there was baseline information on mobile phone penetration among this population. The national figures provided look at mobile phone ownership in "21 representative countries". An actual figure for the US would be more relevant. More telling, the recruitment process for this study only selected people with a mobile phone and no indication is provided as to the number of women excluded for lack of mobile phone ownership. This makes it difficult to assess the importance of the study findings.

The first sentence in the "Data Collection" section of the methods appears to be incomplete or has its components disordered.

The results appear competently conducted and are clearly reported. An error does occur in the first line of the "Health literacy and cell phone usage characteristics" section, which incorrectly refers to "7.0% of the population", when it is describing sample characteristics.

The conclusions drawn from the study results are generally reasonable - particularly from the study imitations onwards. The first page of the discussion however, proposes that written messages may need to be simplified further - in the total absence of any supporting data. The third page of the discussion introduces a literature review, which is an odd place to do that in a manuscript. The relevant part of that review (the Ahlers-Schmidt et al. paper) should be used there but the rest of the discussion of the review is unneeded at this point in the manuscript.

The abstract makes it sound like women in the study are receiving 9 text messages a day from the text4babies program. The results make clear that this isn't the case but this could be made clearer in the abstract.

The manuscript is generally well written with just a few writing errors.
P. 7 "... nutrition classes (which are a mandated for all ...)
P. 11 first line: "... and 445 who completed the NVS were included ..."
third line: "Almost all (92.3%) of study participants ..."
Lisa Elon's contribution sentence also needs a little editing.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I do not have any financial or non-financial competing interests.