Reviewer's report

Title: Feasibility, acceptability and potential efficacy of a mobile health (mHealth) weight management programme for New Zealand adults

Version: 1 Date: 12 May 2014

Reviewer: Setia Hermawati

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Methods:

1. Programme development – in this sub section, it was mentioned that the mHealth programme was based on certain criteria, including personalisation of messages. However, the results of the study showed that the messages were deemed to be generic, impersonal, irrelevant etc. by participants. As the two seem to contradict each other, additional explanation on the level of “personalisation of messages” in the method section is needed e.g. to what extent/level the messages personalisation was integrated in the mHealth?

2. Study measures – in this subsection, it was reported that blood pressures were recorded at baseline and follow-up visit. However, this data seems to be missing in results sections and no further explanation is given.

Results:

1. Study retention – “Over the 12-week study period, four participants withdrew from the study and one person was lost to follow up”. How does this tally with a total of 36 completers?

2. Programme adherence (first paragraph) – “During eight-week intervention phase, most participants (n=35, 66%) reported reading “all” of most “text” sent”. How was this information obtained? The methods section (study measures sub section) does not seem to cover or explain this. Also, why does the number of participants go down from 36 to 35?

Discussion:

While the limitation of the study was briefly addressed, no discussion is made regarding the short-time frame of the study (i.e. 8 weeks for texts responses and 12 weeks for website activities) and how this could potentially affect the study measures.

Minor Essential Revisions

Results:

1. Programme adherence (first paragraph): “... In total, 210 responses were received to the step count questions (39% response rate excluding duplicate responses and allowing for withdrawals) and 250 replies to the goal success questions (55% response rate). ” The use of percentages here is confusing as it
was not clear whether they were calculated based on texts sent to 53 or 36 participants. Perhaps additional information could be added to clarify these e.g. adding the total number of expected responses.

2. Programme adherence (second paragraph): “…. Of the study to 0-2 hits/week in weeks 13-16”. The mHealth programme was a 12 week study. Is the “weeks 13-16” typo?

3. Change in body weight and BMI at 12 weeks – Please adopt APA style while reporting the statistical results.

Discussion:

Please make sure that the references on the second last paragraph (i.e. [27] and [22]) are cited correctly.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests.