Author’s response to reviews

Title: An education intervention to improve decision making and health literacy among older Australians: a randomised controlled trial

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Author’s response to reviews:

Re: BMC Geriatrics BGTC-D-17-00608

On behalf of my co-authors please find attached a revised manuscript in response to the peer review. We have addressed the points raised in the attached document and with the tracked changes to the manuscript.

I would be grateful if the following could be communicated to the Editor.

This manuscript has been in peer review since November 2017, with reviewer comments received 24 February 2018. Given this excessive time period I would strongly request that we receive a timely re-review, or even that a re-review is not conducted and instead we have an editor review of the resubmission.

Editor comments

1. We note that the current submission contains some textual overlap with other previously published works (39%), in particular: 29% - "An education intervention to improve health literacy and decision making about supporting self-care among older Australians: a study protocol for a randomised controlled trial" (2017) Trials DOI: 10.1186/s13063-017-2182-2.
Please see the attached overlap of the sections which need to be rewritten. While we understand that
this is work that you have previously published, and some of the same ideas are contained in these publications, please be aware that we cannot condone the use of text from previously published work. Please re-phrase these sections to minimise overlap. Response: Thank you the text has been re-phrased accordingly.

2. Please include the date the trial was registered in the Trial Registration section.
Response: the trial was registered on 5 February 2016.

3. Please provide figure titles/legends under a separate heading of 'Figure Legends' after the References. If Figure titles/legends are within the main text of the manuscript, please move them. Response: new section added and reference to figure removed in the text

Reviewer reports:
Taeho Greg Rhee, PhD (Reviewer 1): Here are some comments:

1) In line 2 of introduction, authors stated more than 3.5 million Australians are 65 or older. Can you provide the % of the entire population? Response: 15.8% added to Introduction.

2) In lines 20-25 (last paragraph of Introduction): Authors need to state research questions and hypotheses clearly here. Lines 30-42 should be listed at the end of Introduction, not Methods. Response: change made.

3) In the Methods section, "Participants and setting" must comes first before other sub-sections. Response: change made.

4) Also, in "Participants and setting" and "Sample recruitment and retention", time period is missing. Please provide when this study was approved and conducted. Response: time period added to relevant section and date of ethics approval added to section on ethics.

5) In statistical analysis, authors stated "chi-square." If they refer to Pearson's, please state it explicitly (i.e., Pearson's chi-squared statistic). Response: Pearson’s added.

6) Lines 24-26 in statistical analysis: Authors stated that p<0.05 as statistical significance. What about the effect size? How big is big enough? Response: as stated in the section on sample size we estimated a moderate effect size would be obtained (i.e. Cohen D = 0.5). We have not re stated this in the statistical analysis section.

7) Lines 32-41 in the Results section: This is not really study findings, but they are part of methods. They need to be listed in the methods section instead. Response: dates of study moved to methods.

Cathy A Maxwell, PhD (Reviewer 2): BMC Geriatrics Review: Manuscript BGTC-D-17-00608

Methods
The design is a non-blinded parallel randomized controlled trial. Participants were recruited from retirement villages and senior citizen clubs and associations. These groups represent a potential
selection bias. Recruitment efforts are reported, however the authors do not state if an incentive was offered. Response: no incentives were offered.

Intervention: Two multi-media education modalities (Web-based/DVD vs. booklet only). The authors state that these programs offer advantages over traditional information delivery methods. It would be helpful to clarify what is meant by "traditional." Response: clarification given in text to traditional as spoken communication and possible supplementary written information.