Reviewer's report

Title: "Happy Feet": Evaluating the benefits of a 100-day 10,000 step challenge on mental health and wellbeing

Version: 0 Date: 16 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Sharon Lawn

Reviewer's report:

References to Stepathlon are not appropriate within the text. Please revise eg. 'an organized team-based walking program' or something to capture the intent. In the methods section, it would be good to include more about how the activity was promoted at the sites. There is very little about the sites too. There doesn't seem to be any justification for why the sample included participants from Australia and from India and whether there were any differences cross-culturally, etc. What types of workplaces were they, etc.? The acronyms for some measures need to be full words for first use - SPWS, GHO-12, WHO-5 and PANAS-PA. More about the baseline characteristics of participants would be useful. I think the first sentence of the discussion section should be rephrased. I agree with reviewer 1's concerns. Given that it was notable that mental health and wellbeing improved for those who were more active and the same magnitude of improvement was observed for those who stepped less, I think the authors should discuss other potential explanations beyond merely stating that it was because of increased activity. The social nature of the activity, its competitiveness, its team-building qualities and the potential for all of these to improve self-efficacy and self-worth, for example, could be explored more. Further discussion of sense of connection etc. could be explored more. There is no discussion of sustainability issues. The information about the studies related to improved absenteeism and expenditure could be expanded. Tell the readers a bit more about what the outcomes of those studies actually involved. You say it was across a number of countries - Australia and India = 2. The limitations section should be expanded. I think you mean 'pre-existing diagnosis of mental health issues'. Pre-existing physical health conditions is also likely a limitation. The absence of report on individual's prior overall level of activity is a very significant limitation, as is any physical limitations.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.
I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal