Reviewer's report

Title: Weight-Loss Intervention Using Implementation Intentions and Mental Imagery: A Randomised Control Trial Study Protocol

Version: 1 Date: 5 January 2015

Reviewer: Kate Jolly

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes the protocol for a three arm randomised controlled trial of weight loss interventions with an attention control, an intervention using implementation intentions and mental imagery delivered by video and the latter plus text messages to remind participants about the goals they set to achieve a calorie reduction and increased exercise.

The protocol paper is rather long and has quite a bit of repetition and could benefit from some trimming. I can see from the trial registration that recruitment should be virtually complete, so will not make comments on the methods.

Major compulsory revisions

Early in the article you need to explain what intervention intentions are; this is a public health journal, not a psychology journal, so understanding should not be assumed.

Justify why you selected the two primary outcomes and why two, rather than one.

Page 10: The start of the section ‘The present study’ repeats points that were made earlier on page 6. They do not need to be repeated.

Page 9/10 ‘summary of intervention’ really summarises the design and the intervention. I think everything in it is covered elsewhere and it could be omitted.

The section on basal metabolic rate and the Katch-McArdle formula is not quite clear. Whilst you explain that the age, gender and weight of a person is used for the calculation, the formula given uses none of these parameters. This needs clarifying.

In the section describing the intervention, it would be useful to know the duration of the video for each intervention and control group. How long does the session take, with the If-then planning etc?

In the statistical analysis section (page 25), it would be helpful to describe how you intend to deal with missing data?

In the discussion there should be some acknowledgement that given the large number of questionnaires, only motivated and potentially compliant people are likely to take part and complete the study. This will lead to issues of
generalizability.

Table 2: the definition of outcome expectancies could be more clearly defined.

Appendix A: please define ‘major illnesses/diseases’ more clearly. Perhaps give an example of what would and would not constitute and exclusion.

Minor essential revisions

Page 5 penultimate line of ‘diet and physical…’ activity para: should be calories per serving

Discretionary revisions

Page 5: the paper by Mitsui has a small sample size. It might be better to use a trial of larger sample size and higher quality as an example.

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'