Reviewer’s report

Title: Using New Technologies to Promote Weight Management: A Randomised Controlled Trial Study Protocol

Version: 1 Date: 7 March 2015

Reviewer: Lucy Yardley

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Overall, this paper is well written and provides a clear and useful description of the proposed project. However, the protocol needs to demonstrate awareness of and adherence to the relevant CONSORT guidelines for trial design and reporting.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The paper does not currently mention the relevant CONSORT guidelines; following these is compulsory for publication of protocols in BMC. As a result, some essential protocol details have been omitted – most notably, details of concealment of allocation in randomisation and blinding of data collection and analysis.

Minor Essential Revisions

I was only able to be certain from reading the Appendices that the content of the Facebook-delivered and pamphlet-delivered interventions would be identical, except for the Facebook facilitated/moderated peer forum and additional instructions on engaging with this for the Facebook intervention group – it would be helpful to the reader to make this explicit more prominently in the paper itself.

Discretionary Revisions

The Discussion section currently strongly favours the hypothesis that use of Facebook will enhance intervention effects, which seems premature. In advance of the trial results, it might be better to adopt the conventional ‘equipoise’ position for a trial, that Facebook use may or may not enhance intervention effects (as there is actually evidence that many people do not like or benefit from online peer interaction when attempting behaviour change).

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

None