Reviewer's report

Title: Using a Qualitative Approach for Understanding Hospital-affiliated Integrated Clinical and Fitness Facilities: Characteristics and Members' Experiences

Version: 4
Date: 2 March 2015

Reviewer: Tracy Kolbe-Alexander

Reviewer's report:

General Comments:

The research is interesting and the findings have the potential to support the Exercise is Medicine initiative and promote the prevention of non-communicable diseases. The manuscript is well written.

However, there are limitations. The participants include only those who are still current members of the facility, while this limitation is briefly noted by the authors, the findings are in line with what we would expect. Including focus group discussions with ex-members, or those who chose not to remain at the facility post rehabilitation, would have provided novel and valuable information. The other limitation is that the FGD included the facilities' board members, which might have further skewed the results.

The authors should try to separate the opinions of those who joined the facility post rehabilitation versus those who joined the facility without any injury or illness. This might introduce some novel findings. Similarly, are the board members perceptions different to those of the general members?

Major Compulsory revisions:

My second concern is that the discussion lacks depth and is largely a repetition of the results. The authors could even compare their findings with those of cardiac rehab (or other rehab programs), especially since it appears that many of the LifeStyles members have comorbidities. Therefore, the discussion should be revised so that there are some comparisons with other studies.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Page 4, Line 72-73:
Did the staff give the study information sheet to members? Please clarify as this sentence is a bit unclear. In addition, do the researchers know how many members received information, in order to calculate a response rate? How did the staff and research team identify which members were interested in participating?

Page 5, line 77:
Including the advisory board members in the FGD gives the facility /
management’s perspective, which could be different to those of the members. They should have been in a separate focus group, as their presence could have further biased discussions. This needs to be acknowledged as a limitation.

Page 5, line 91:
What is meant by ‘utilization’? Is it the types of programs attended, frequency of use, or both, etc?

Page 5 and 6: lines 94 – 103:
This section can be summarized and written more succinctly.

Page 6: Lines 105 – 108:
The authors should consider adding the questions in the interview guide as a table or part of the text.

Page 6: Lines 113 -114
How many themes were excluded? The authors might want to include a table of the themes that were included as well as those that were excluded.

Page 7, line 123:
This is repetition of what was mentioned earlier in the paper.

Page 7, line 125:
Include the standard deviation for age.

Page 7: Line 141
What is meant by ‘offerings’? This is somewhat vague and needs more clarification.

Page 8 line 157:
The word ‘experiences’ is a broad term. What experience?

Page 8, line 159 – 161:
This is a long sentence and the message gets a bit confusing. I would suggest a separate sentence so that it’s clear that the free memberships are offered by other gyms.

Page 10 line 191 -192:
Did most of the members join after rehab or did most join Lifestyles without any injury or illness – you can have both as ‘many’.

Page 11:
One or two quotes for each theme/sub-theme is sufficient.

Page 11,
The sub-themes ‘making new friends’ and ‘social support’ could be combined as
one theme.

Page 12: Line 250
Can the authors tell us more about the staff in the introduction or methods (research setting).

Page 14 and 15, lines 302 – 306:
This can be summarized

Page 16, line 344
I agree with the authors that this is a major limitation. As a result, the findings are what we would expect from current members of a fitness facility.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests