Reviewer's report

Title: Live Balance - A mindfulness based universal mental health promotion program: Conceptualization, implementation, participants' evaluation and compliance in a field setting.

Version: 4
Date: 12 June 2015

Reviewer: Sigrid Stjernswärd

Reviewer's report:

The paper is very interesting and answers its aim. Mental health problems are common, expensive and associated with decreased quality of life and health status both for patients and their families. Intervening at an early stage through primary prevention is essential in the ambition to prevent further ill health and costs to society. It seems to be an interesting and highly acceptable program, with high compliance in participants; essential aspects for the "success" of health interventions. It will be interesting to read more about its effects in forthcoming studies.

Major compulsory revision

The reference list was missing, making it impossible to assess the sources and "dig deeper" into the mentioned studies.

Minor essential revisions

Method, participants, first sentence: can you clarify the inclusion criteria "ability to judge"?

Evaluative measures: appraisal was measured at t1 and compliance at t3. What was measured at t2 (first sentence)?

Discussion, paragraph beginning with "as this trial", last sentence: I guess you mean "for no-response".

Discussion, last paragraph: the authors write that males tended to be slightly less satisfied with the course. Does this show in the results section?

Same paragraph as above: do the suggested changes (different imagery, motivational structure and presentation of topics) refer to the younger participants only or to men too? Regarding the male population, the authors refer to more negative attitudes to mental health in men and also a lesser tendency to seek help for such issues. Not that an answer to these reflections are expected in the current paper, but do you have any suggestions through which such (stigma) issues can be addressed using a program like Live Balance? The authors also describe characteristics that are associated with more help-seeking (gender, age, education), which may explain why more women than men enrolled in the study. Maybe the fact that depression is more common in women than men may
contribute to explain the sample’s constitution, even if the program was described as a program to promote balance (did the advertisement/information to participants mention anything about mental health or was this avoided?)? Just some thoughts...

Program development: the program is well-described. A question though: were the additional book and CD necessary for e.g. home training or just add-ons? Do you know if they were used by (most) participants?

Discretionary revisions

Background, first sentence, minor detail: Although the WHO is well-known, I suggest that the authors write the World Health Organization in full text with the acronym (WHO) within parantheses the first time it is mentionned.

Many sentences begin with numbers, e.g. "37% of all participants...". It doesn't affect the papers’ comprehensibility, however I have been taught that it should be avoided.

Sample characteristics, last paragraph: although it is understated a clarification can be made in the last sentence, that there were no differences in terms of socio-demographic variables etc in comparison to "the baseline sample".

Table 2: minor glitch in the "qualification - no school" line

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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."