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: 1 July 2015  
Reviewer: Carla Marienfeld

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

This is a study assessing primary prevention program for mental health paid for and conducted by a major insurance agency in Germany. The size of the program and number of participants is impressive, though pilot studies demonstrating feasibility and efficacy should have been conducted prior to such commitment of resources. Overall, this is worth reporting in the literature; however, I would recommend editing for grammar and English language assistance. Also, there are many details that are not directly relevant in both the introduction and discussion. Both of these sections are long and could be more efficiently presented.

Strengths:
Large sample size.
Real-world population based study.
Good evidence base for development of the program.

Weaknesses:
Only 37% of the sample agreed to participate in the study.
The population being studied choose to enroll in this program.
The “comparison group” is data from general German population.

Suggestions:
Abstract conclusion line 58: Clarify what is meant by “mental load”.
The conclusion that “the concept of Live Balance seems suitable and feasible for universal prevention, irrespective of the target population” is overly broad and needs to be supported by the data in the paper.
Line 105: Add the opening parenthesis.
Lines 108-112: The grammar/punctuation here should be reviewed.
Line 116: “it’s safe to say” is not a sound scientifically supported phrasing. Perhaps replace with “one could argue that”
Line 120-121: “to improve, support and consolidate their balance in everyday life 121 and work” – Wellness programs and primary mental health disorder prevention programs are not necessarily the same thing and should not be used as interchangeable ideas. This sentence: “As universal prevention does not target specific or individual risk factors, the goal of the pro- 126 ject was to promote protective factors for mental health and enhance participant’s level of 127 resilience.” Does help explain the rational and link the two concepts, but this needs to be kept clear throughout the paper.

Section starting on line 128: While there is evidence of certain protective factors for mental and resilience, it does not necessarily follow that increasing these protective factors broadly prevents mental illness. I am aware that the evaluation phase of this project seeks to demonstrate this to some degree, but this idea needs to be paramount in discussing evidence for protective/resilience factors, as humans often make the mistake in assuming that increasing these leads to improved mental health/resilience, which may or may not be the case.

Example line 36: Are the references correct per the journal style? Is it correct to use [e.g. 26] or (DBT; [41])? This are not formats I am familiar with.

Line 152: The data on the efficacy of mindfulness based interventions on mental health and substance use outcomes is more mixed than this paragraph acknowledges and would be improved with a more balanced review of this.

Line 158-160: Fix the grammar.

Line 172: Incorrect use of the word trained, I think.

Line 175: Change the word ‘motivated’ to encouraged or something similar – motivated can be confused with motivational interviewing – another technique.

Line 176: I think the authors intend to say an experiential approach. “experience based approach” is confusing.

Line 195: This section probably belongs in Methods.

Line 211: Methods, not Method

*At this point I will stop commenting on grammar and punctuation. However, the authors are encouraged to seek review by a native English speaker who is also familiar with the terminology for this type of work.

Line 269: Please add the total number eligible to participate, in addition to the total number enrolled IN the course. Also, add the information about the population who were invited to participate – were they equally male/female (important to know since more females enrolled), etc…

Line 302: “Caseness”? 

Line 320: Table 4 does not add much information. The statistics reported in the paragraph convey a high level of satisfaction. Given that the mean score does not differ much for any of the questions, I would remove this table.

Line 393: No need to repeat results in the discussion.

Line 447: The declaration of conflict of interest should specify what the conflict is.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.