Author's response to reviews

Title: Determining how best to support overweight adults to adhere to effective lifestyle change: Protocol for the SWIFT study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Victorino Silvestre
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Study protocol
Determining how best to support overweight adults to adhere to effective lifestyle change:
Protocol for the SWIFT study
Rachael W Taylor, Melyssa Roy, Michelle R Jospe, Hamish R Osborne, Kim Meredith-Jones, Sheila M Williams and Rachel C Brown
BMC Public Health

Dear Mr Silvestre,

Thank you for your email of 3rd February requesting clarification of the issues listed below. Your comments are shown in italics below, followed by our response:

As you may be aware, it is the policy of the journal not to peer review study protocols where ethical and external funding approval have been obtained, as these processes usually involve peer review and as there is little possibility to change a protocol after enrolment begins. Therefore, could you please respond to the following points below and provide the requested responses in your cover letter.

1. Ethical and Funding Approval Documentation
Before we can proceed with your submission, can you please forward copies of all ethical approval and funding approval for our records. These documents should be sent as email attachments to the following email address, BMCSeriesEditorial@biomedcentral.com. Please DO NOT upload these documents as additional files in the submission system. If your documents are not in English, please could you provide translated versions of the relevant parts. These should be endorsed and signed by a contactable person at the institution. Please also include the original documents. Can you please confirm in your cover letter that you have forwarded the requested documentation to BMCSeriesEditorial@biomedcentral.com.

Our final ethical approval letter has been attached as requested. As noted below, our funding was received from a private bequest so there is no official funding letter per se. However, a representative from our institution could write a letter detailing this bequest if required by
2. Funding
A study is considered to be externally funded if the authors have been awarded a grant for the study by a major funding body (e.g. governmental funding/award from a charitable foundation). If a study has not received external funding, then the study protocol will be sent for peer-review with a member of our Editorial Board. If a study has received funding/assistance from a commercial organization, this should be clearly stated in the 'competing interests' section of your manuscript, and the study protocol will be sent for peer-review by a member of our Editorial Board. Can you please confirm whether your study protocol has undergone peer-review by the funding body.

Our study is not externally funded at this point as we have sufficient funds from a private bequest to our research institution (detailed in our Acknowledgements on page 22). However, peer review has occurred both as part of the ethical approval process and from unsuccessful external grant applications.

3. Study status
The protocol must be for a study that is ongoing. An ‘ongoing’ study is defined as one where the investigators are still collecting, or analyzing data. Can you please confirm what stage your study is currently at.

We have just started recruiting so our study is certainly ongoing.

4. Related Articles
Can you please clarify whether any publications containing the results of this study have already been published or submitted to any journal. If so, can you please provide a list of the related articles.

No other articles have been published or submitted at this time.

5. Please provide your trial registration number at the end of the abstract in the manuscript and submission system, and please also provide the date of registration alongside this. e.g. Trial registration: Current Controlled Trials ISRCTN73824458. Registered 28 September 2004

Our trial registration number was provided at the end of the abstract and we have now added the registration date.

Thank you for considering our manuscript. We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Rachael Taylor
Karitane Senior Research Fellow in Early Childhood Obesity