Author’s response to reviews

Title: Medical Advice for Sick-reported Students (MASS) in Intermediate Vocational Education schools: Design of a controlled before-and-after study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

Thank you for your e-mail. You provided us with the editor’s comments below. Our answers are highlighted beneath each comment.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

On behalf of all authors,

Sincerely,

Hein Raat

Editor's comment:
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.

Response by the authors:

We forwarded the requested document to the suggested email address. At the end of the document an English translation can be found.

Editor's comment:

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.

Response by the authors:

Hereby I confirm that this study protocol has undergone peer-review by the funding organization ZonMw, Organization for Health Research and Development. ZonMw provided the following referent number for this study: 531005011.
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.

Response by the authors:

This study is currently ‘ongoing’; the study is at the stage of collecting follow up data.

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.

Response by the authors:

There are no publications published or submitted yet to any journal containing the results of this study.

5. Declarations

In accordance with BioMed Central editorial policies and formatting guidelines, all submissions to BMC Public Health must have a Declarations section which includes the mandatory sub-sections listed below. Please refer to the journal’s Submission Guidelines web page for information regarding the criteria for each sub-section (https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/)

Response by the authors:

This design paper contains the mentioned mandatory sub-sections within the declaration section.