Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative analysis exploring preferred methods of peer support to encourage adherence to a Mediterranean Diet in a Northern European population at high risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Version: 0 Date: 07 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Estefania Toledo

Reviewer’s report:

In this paper, Erwin and colleagues have explored the preferred methods of peer support to encourage the adherence to the Mediterranean diet in a Northern Ireland with a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to their results, a group-based approach was the most highly rated method of peer support.

The manuscript is nicely written and provides insight into how to appropriately design large intervention studies aiming to increase the adherence to the Mediterranean diet in populations in which the Mediterranean diet is not the traditional dietary pattern. Given the health benefits that may be derived from a higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet, this paper merits attention.

There are, however, some minor issues that may be considered:

- I do not consider that the statistical software that was used to analyse the data has to specified in the abstract

- I would suggest including where the focus groups took place

- the introduction could be shortened

- please, review how the references are referred to in the text: eg. line 151: "[4,5][6,7]" instead of "[4-7]"

- I would suggest using the term type 2 diabetes instead of "Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus" (lines 212-213, e.g.)

- line 227: please, provide more information on the 8-item MD food frequency questionnaire. Was this brief questionnaire previously validated? Which questions did it include?

- please, be consistent in the use of abbreviations. The authors have defined the abbreviation MD for Mediterranean diet but they sometimes use the full wording, e.g. lines 502, 561, 605, 620
- lines 604-605: according to the ISRCTN registry, the TEAM-MED trial is about to finish in December 2017. Please, review verbal time of this sentence and provide information on how the results from the present work were useful for designing the intervention in the TEAM-MED trial.

- please, review the references. Sometimes the initial letter is used for the names but sometimes the full name appears (eg. refs 1 and 5). For some authors, the last name starts with lower case (e.g. ref 6). In ref 6, the third author is not correctly referred to. Some last names are misspelled (e.g. ref 10). Some coauthors, volumes and journals are missing (e.g. 13). In some references, the initial of the names appears in lower case letters (e.g. 31,40). Reference 22 does not seem to be complete and it appears all in capital letters.

- the tables do not appear in successive order

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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