Reviewer's report

Title: A pedometer-based walking intervention with and without email counseling in general practice: a pilot randomized controlled trial

Version: 0 Date: 29 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Courtney Monroe

Reviewer's report:
The aim of this study was to assess the feasibility and efficacy of providing email-delivered counseling as part of a pedometer-based physical activity intervention occurring in the context of a primary care setting. This randomized controlled trial is characterized by a number of strengths, including measures of adherence and engagement, examination of recruitment feasibility from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, and high retention rates. The manuscript is well written and reasonable insights regarding the findings are detailed in light of previous literature. The following minor concerns would enhance the article:

Intro
-Please consider specifying the outcomes as part of objective "d" (e.g., "...efficacy of the interventions on daily step counts and related health outcomes")

Methods
-Please describe why the pedometer was worn around the neck and the validity and reliability of the eVito 3D step counter for measuring steps at that location if possible.
-Where were the participants instructed to wear their pedometer in terms of location during the intervention?
-Was there a theoretical basis for the interventions?
-Did the PED group get specific goals in the same way that the PEMAIL group did or were they told to generally increase their daily number of steps up to 10,000 without more specific goals? Please confirm/clarify.
Did counselors ever send an email response back to a participant's email response? If so, how often did that occur?

Results
-p. 14, line 334: please describe how this aspect (emails received) was tracked.

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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