Reviewer’s report

Title: The effectiveness of using a WeChat account to improve exclusive breastfeeding in Huzhu County Qinghai Province, China: protocol for a randomized control trial

Version: 1 Date: 29 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

No - there are minor issues

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

N/A - no experiments or analyses

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

N/A - there are no statistics in this study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

N/A - no results to interpret

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?

Probably - with minor revisions
GENERAL COMMENTS: * What is your overall impression of the study?

This study protocol describes the proposed Randomised Control Trial to assess effectiveness of WeChat mobile apps on the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding in rural Qinghai Province, China. The authors claim it to be the first trial of this kind. Exclusive breastfeeding is an important public health issue, especially in industrialized nation like China.

The protocol has been described in details and satisfactory for publication with few clarifications.

* What have the authors have done well?

The authors have written the protocol well with detail description of methodology.

In what ways does it not meet best practice?

Few clarifications on study population, sample size and techniques of random sampling are needed.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

Topic:

Since the study is limited only in Huzhu County, it should also come in the title.

Background:

How many were registered in WeChat: one billion or 20 million? Is public or official accounts is less that the overall?

Why this study is focussed in rural areas of china rather than urban areas, while the users of WeChat are more likely to be in urban areas which, I assume, have lower rates of exclusive breastfeeding.

Methods:

Design:

Please state sample size for intervention and control group as well as the sampling unit?

How is it ensured that only intervention group will receive the WeChat breastfeeding education? Women in control groups may access the information via others account?
Study area:

Please provide the study population size of Huzhu county (i.e. the number of women with reproductive ages and expected number of annual pregnancies). Based on this study population size, the total sample of 400 to be randomised may be less.

Sample size and sample?

Will the authors separate intervention and control townships out of total 13 townships and how many pregnant women were there in intervention and control arm in total? What is meant by the group?

How will the random selection of pregnant women be done?

Recruitment and randomisation:

If the women are randomised from the same township, how is the control group prevented from accessing the educational app or material?

Intervention:

Is the WeChat app pre-tested?

Control group:

In routine antenatal and postnatal health care, health workers are supposed to provide breastfeeding education. How much this is applicable to the study area in China? Do health workers not provide any such education? If yes, this may affect to truly assess the effect of WeChat.

Outcome measurement:

To which group secondary outcomes are assessed?

Data collection:

Where face-to-face interviews take place?

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

No
Does the work include the necessary controls? 
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

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

Unable to assess

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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