Reviewer’s report

Title: ChrOnic pain self-ManageMent support with pain science EducatioN and exerCisE (COMMENCE): A randomized controlled trial protocol

Version: 1 Date: 11 August 2015

Reviewer: Gianfranco Di Gennaro

Reviewer’s report:

The aim of the protocol submitted is to evaluate the effectiveness of a self-management programme (named COMMANCE) in people suffering of non-cancer chronic pain. The objective will be pursued by a repeated-measures cross-over trial in which patients undergoing the programme will be compared to patients of a waiting-list.

From the analysis of the literature, this protocol promises a sufficient scientific contribution and the topic has to be considered of remarkable impact.

The authors demonstrate a clear knowledge and awareness; the bibliography is rich and updated. The objectives of the study is well-expressed and the use of a repeated measures cross-over design is to be considered correct for the pathology in study.

Major Compulsory Revisions

#1 Even if a carryover effect is anticipated for this kind of treatment, a reference should be introduced; contrary I suggest to demonstrate it by the opportune estimation in the statistical analysis.

Minor Essential Revisions

#2 The statistical plan is globally correct even if not always precise. The baseline measures are to be described by means +/- standard deviations when the data are normally distributed. Conversely, median and interquartile range are to be preferred.

#3 Between group comparison at baseline is useless since it represents the measure of the randomization.

#4 Details provided are sufficient for the replication of the study in a similar health-structure, even if an inferred population is not described by precise inclusion/exclusion criteria (age, comorbidities).

#5 I strongly suggest, if possible, to insert the sample-size formula used by GLIMMPSE Software.

Discretionary Revisions

#6 The writing is surely acceptable. I suggest to use lists where preferable (for
example when secondary outcomes are described).

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.