Reviewer’s report

Title: Undertaking a randomised controlled trial in the police setting: methodological and practical challenges

Version: 0 Date: 02 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Sowmyanarayanan Thuppal

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript describes the challenges faced in conducting Connect Trial in general and specifically addresses the issues faced while conducting clinical trial in a police setting. The manuscript is very well written, however I have the following suggestions and comments.

1. In the abstract, it would be more informative to mention the study outcomes and duration of follow-up. Also in the conclusion the authors have mentioned that the manuscript provides "Recommendations on the conduct of future randomized controlled trials in the police setting...."- But in the manuscript the study challenges are discussed in details but the recommendations are not specifically provided.

2. Box 1- please provide more information about the trial like, current study status, number of participants enrolled.

The primary outcome of the study is "the number of incidents which resulted in a police response...". It is very difficult to understand how number of incidents will help to evaluate the effectiveness of a mental health training package. Please explain the outcome measure more clearly.

3. Some of the challenges mentioned in this study are common to all RCT and pragmatic trials while other challenges like involving police personal during the development of protocol, using the help of police data analyst etc are specific to research with police officers. So for simplicity it would be easier to separate these two categories and give more emphasis on challenges specific to research with police officers.

4. If possible and if relevant, please consider comparing the challenges with other studies in police setting and come up with a list of possible recommendations for research in police community.

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