Reviewer’s report

Title: Effect of an exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation program 'Baduanjin eight silken movement with self-efficacy building' for heart failure (BESMILE-HF study): study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Version: 0 Date: 09 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Victoria Haldane

Reviewer's report:

An interesting and contextually relevant study; the inclusion of a qualitative component is promising for understanding patient perspectives on acceptability of the program.

(Qualitative Component) Line 396: Acceptability of BESMILE-HF program: What are the specific aims of the in-depth interviews? Would be good to elaborate a bit on what areas of program acceptability you are seeking to understand - content? delivery method? patient perceptions of their personal outcomes? challenges to uptake?

What is the sampling strategy for the qualitative component? Is there a proposed number of interviews and how will you determine when you've reached data saturation?

If possible mention who will be conducting the interview and explain any qualitative training or experience they will have.

Also would be useful to mention in this section the proposed analysis plan (including proposed analysis type and proposed analysis software, if applicable) and to what end the data will be used - recommendations? program modifications?

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Needs some language corrections before being published
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**Statistical review**

Is it essential that this manuscript is seen by an expert statistician? If so, please give your reasons in your report.

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