Reviewer’s report

Title: Identifying important barriers to recruitment of patients in randomised clinical studies using a questionnaire for study personnel

Version: 1 Date: 07 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Catherine Arundel

Reviewer's report:

Many thanks for your review of previous comments relating to your manuscript. Your clarifications have been most helpful here in understanding how the study was conducted and why decisions were made in the way that they were. I would however suggest that some of the clarification you have provided in response to reviewer comments be included within the manuscript, for clarity.

Introduction
- The additional sentence 'The study subjects...' doesn't link to the previous text. Suggest adding 'Furthermore' to the start of the sentence might help here.

- The additional sentence 'It is considered...' requires re-wording as this is not grammatically correct as it stands. Suggest you should include that early planning can not only predict but also help to mitigate problems.

- You continue to note that little is known about the barriers to recruitment from the perspective of recruiters. I would agree literature is limited, but suggest it is far more extensive that you suggest - e.g. papers by Ross et al, Prescott et al etc have explored this previously.

- Do the 'Workshops and interviews...' offer suggestions to resolving barriers to recruitment?

- I suggest you should reflect within the text as to why the tool developed by Kaur was not used in your work.

Methods
- I suggest you should make clear that the 148 included in the main phase did also include those within the pilot phase

Results
- I suggest it would be useful to make clear that a definition of 'fun' was not provided, this was open to interpretation by respondents and no detail was gathered as to what the respondents interpretations were of this.

- Details of co-authorship and proposals of sub trials are not listed in Table 2 although are detailed in the text. Please include these.
Discussion
- Paragraph 2: you note that understanding difficulties helps problems as they arise. Surely if difficulties are identified up front then this allows for strategies to be planned and implemented before they arise. It would be useful to make this clear.

- The addition of 'With this study...' in paragraph 2 is a useful addition, however it doesn't link to the previous text. It would be helpful if this were reworded to link with the previous text.

- The addition of 'Conversely stroke affects.....certainly does not cover' is useful to highlight where findings may not directly apply. The sentences don't however link to the previous text. It might be useful to precurse this with 'There are however instances where these findings may not directly apply for example in patients with stroke which affects....or other diseases e.g. pancreatic cancer....'

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