Reviewer’s report

Title: A protocol for a systematic review of non-randomised evaluations of strategies to increase participant retention to randomised controlled trials

Version: 0 Date: 10 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Maria Delius

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting protocol that can be published with minor revision.

I would suggest to change the imperative statements given by the authors in the discussion section of the abstract and further in the text.

(Page 3 line 38 -45 and page 7 line 22-29 and page 15 line 9 to 21)

'If the results of this review signify that evaluating retention strategies in observational studies is worthless, review authors will be in a comfortable position to recommend to funders and trial stakeholders that researchers should not design, conduct and report such studies.'

The expression 'worthless', authors will be in a comfortable position...' seem too extreme and not scientific. As well is the conclusion, 'that researchers should not design .... such studies' too far going, it seems even presumptuous

The possibility, that this review does not capture the filed in its whole range - topics, designs, etc. is always given and formulations should be chosen that show more modesty should be chosen.

page 5 line 40-54 two sentences are repetitive (words: potential, problems)

page 14 line 53 'these rather ignored studies' is unscientific and not true from a clinical standpoint, should be changed.

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