Reviewer’s report

Title: Usefulness and engagement with a guided workbook intervention (WorkPlan) to support work related goals among cancer survivors

Version: 1 Date: 04 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Phillipa Hay

Reviewer's report:

This is a qualitative study of 23 participant's experience with a workbook based intervention to assist people returning to work after cancer.

The study found participants reported the intervention was useful in structuring their return to work, improving attitudes and beliefs, reducing anxiety and that the optimal time for the intervention was at final treatment. There appeared to be particular benefits in the act of writing.

The background presents a cogent argument for the research question.

Methods:

This is a nested study and as such the sample size is pre-determined - nevertheless it is a moderately large sample and exceeded the recruitment target n of 20.

The methods are rigorous and are generally well enunciated.

Minor points

Line 104 - it would be more correct to state the protocol for the intervention trial has been reported

Line 144-6 -the description of the analytic method is very brief and does not do justice to the Framework approach - more details would inform the reader better

Similarly it would aid interpretation if a copy of the workbook could be presented as an additional file or the workbook described in much more detail

The methods section usually would include the ethics statement
Results:

There is inconsistency in reporting how many participants endorsed each theme - please supply these numbers and avoid terms like "many".

The Abstract did not capture the improved sense of empowerment - this seems an important point to convey in the abstract.

Line 160-163 - would it be more accurate to state that participants were formerly employed as ..... 

Also add how many were several months from resuming work

The Table is more of a Box - suggest add headings of n(%) or similar and specify years for age and consider an improved layout

Discussion

The discussion is appropriate and includes important limitations - including that some participants did not intend to return to work for many months - it would be important to know how many participants were far from returning to work and include this in the methods/description of participants.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics
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