Reviewer’s report

Title: What influences the selection of contextual cues when starting a new routine behaviour? An exploratory study

Version: 0 Date: 20 Jan 2020

Reviewer: Gerjo Kok

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper, with a focus on understanding how people deal with new routines, applying a qualitative approach. This is clearly a relevant element in many behavior change interventions. I have one methodological issue and I have a suggestion for improvement.

(1) Because we know that participants/patients cannot always report their behavior correctly (e.g. they don't realize that they missed a dose), research in medication adherence has developed over time in terms of reliability of measures, for example, electronic monitoring. In this study, the measure seems quite vague: "self-reports or pill counts". I am not really convinced that the measure, that is used here, is adequate. I would like the authors to describe how they exactly measured adherence and explain why they think that this procedure is reliable and valid.

(2) In terms of behavior change techniques, or behavior change methods (Intervention Mapping), this paper relates to 'stimulus control' and 'cue altering' (Wood & Neel), especially 'stimulus control'. In terms of usefulness of the outcomes for intervention development, it would be helpful if the authors describe more clearly how that method should be used to be most effective (parameters). The current text (Discussion and Conclusion) is not very convincing in that respect. I invite the authors to describe more clearly what the conditions are under which the use of stimuli/cues can be most helpful.

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

Yes

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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