Reviewer’s report

Title: A feasibility study of the Mini-AFTER telephone intervention for the management of fear of recurrence in breast cancer survivors: a mixed-methods study protocol

Version: 1 Date: 03 May 2017

Reviewer: Cathal Cadogan

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for your responses to my previous comments. I have a few additional comments below:

Abstract

Methods section: BCN needs to be defined. The final sentence of this section of the abstract is long and the last line does not make sense to me.

Discussion section: suggest replacing "staff" with "nurses"

Background

Page 4: suggest not having first sentence as a stand alone paragraph (i.e. merge with paragraph below)

"severe FoR" and "high levels of FoR" appear to be used interchangeably in parts of the manuscript; suggest sticking with one term to avoid confusion

Does the "brief 4 item" measure of FoR have a name? Also, what are the items that are included? I am not entirely clear what the percentiles refer to

P5, Line 48: are there specific cancer types for which the intervention has been found to be beneficial?

P5, Line 52: what is "symptom severity" referring to in this context? Is it FoR or some other forms of symptoms?

Page 6 lines 22-33: I do not follow points 2, 3 or 4, that are trying to explain the reasons for the development of the intervention - please revise to aid clarity. The sentence starting with the word "Third" is particularly long and difficult to follow.

P6 Line32: please elaborate on the evidence base - what outcomes have been demonstrated?
P6, Line 42: the term BCN be defined where it is first used; this is not the first part of the introduction to use the term

P7 Line 8: suggest including reference to back up this point.

P7, Line 49: suggest being more explicit that "acceptability and deliverability" is based on BCNs' views

Methods section

P8, Line 43: suggest being more explicit that quantitative data is based on BCNs' views

P8, Line 51: I don't understand what the association being described is going to show or add to the value of the research - please clarify

Is the survey anonymous?

P9 Line 24: should this sentence state that NPT "will be" as opposed to "has been"?

P9 Line 48: this sentence is very long; suggest breaking up

Suggest including separate heading for Phase 1 and Phase 2 sampling and recruitment

Line 18: I am unclear as to how the authors would arrive at a decision about whether a larger trial could be developed based on the study findings; based on what is outlined in this manuscript I would have thought that a more appropriate decision to arrive at was how a larger study would be designed

Limitations

P20, line 39: use of the word "staff" throughout this manuscript gives the impression that multiple stakeholders are involved and I think this is misleading; I would suggest referring to BCNs instead of staff

Are there any plans to engage with other key stakeholders (other clinical staff within the sites where the BCNs work, patients) in progressing to a future evaluation of the intervention?

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:

Acceptable

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