Reviewer’s report

Title: Research protocol: Investigating the feasibility of a group self-management intervention for stroke (The GUSTO study).

Version: 0 Date: 25 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Kirsty Sprange

Reviewer's report:

Abstract

This should include more detail on the setting, intervention and population, for example it needs to be clearer it is adapting an existing intervention, size of groups etc.

Introduction

The introduction feels a little unclear in its discussion of how a self-management approach would support people who feel 'abandoned' (line 17, page 3). It could be made clearer how the 'group' approach would enable better support addressing this issue rather than a 1-1 approach or individual led self-management.

Recruitment

There should be acknowledgment of the limitations of using only one site for recruitment.

The section on using the PTC could be made clearer and more concise, for example stating there are 2 registers that provide a wide range of participants including those who can’t consent for themselves. Also recruiting using chronological order would potentially introduce bias - would it be better to contact a random selection in phases until recruitment target is reached? Page 8 line 18-23 "However, the current PTC…” could be deleted as it is repeated at the beginning of the following paragraph.

Randomisation

More information should be provided on how randomisation will be completed, for example how will this be done, will they be blinded and if so how will this be maintained.
Intervention

More information would be helpful on how the intervention has been adapted for a group setting.

General:

1. I would suggest bringing the sections describing the intervention and its adaptation much earlier in the manuscript.

2. Make sure acronyms are written out in full in the main text first e.g. SMI, page 4, line 2.

3. The font size differs in several places e.g. p6, line 35

4. Some minor spelling issues e.g. p10, line 7 should be 'of' rather than 'or', and in table on p10, line 52 'Flipchart...' is repetition, and table on page 10, line 55 should be 'designed'. A careful proof read should sort these out.

References

There are some duplicates e.g. number 4 and 7; 22 and 42.

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