Author’s response to reviews

Title: Improving bereavement outcomes in Zimbabwe: protocol for a feasibility cluster trial of the 9-cell Bereavement Tool

Authors:

Barbara Mutedzi (bmutedzi@gmail.com)
Lisa Langhaug (lisa.langhaug@gmail.com)
Jennifer Hunt (jhunt@mango.zw)
Kennedy Nkhoma (kennedy.nkhoma@kcl.ac.uk)
Richard Harding (Richard.harding@kcl.ac.uk)

Version: 2 Date: 24 Mar 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

24 March 2019
Dear Editor,

Revised Manuscript ID PAFS-D-18-00211 (Version 2)
Improving bereavement outcomes in Zimbabwe: protocol for a feasibility cluster trial of the 9-cell Bereavement Tool

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to revise our manuscript in response to the reviewers’ helpful and constructive comments. Our response to each comment is provided in the table below. In the revised manuscript the text has been underlined in all sections where we have made changes.

All authors have seen and approved the revised manuscript.

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Thank you for your consideration.
BARBARA MUTEDZI (corresponding author)

REVIEWER 2 COMMENTS

The authors have clearly done the revision and replied to all the reviewer's comments however the revision looks rather 'sketchy' in some places. I think the following points still need to be addressed.

1. Introducing new notations, week X and week Y, does not add clarity neither to the Abstract or the paper. What do you want to say to the reader in the abstract when you write:

'Measures at T0 (i.e. week 0), T1 (i.e. week X) and 48 T2 (i.e. week Y) …'?

What are these week 0, week X and week Y?

Presumably, the reader should guess that week 0 is a baseline but what should he/she guess about weeks X and Y?

It applies to all entries of week 0, week X and week Y throughout the text.

I suggest the authors should think more carefully about their writing style.

AUTHORS' RESPONSE

Thank you for your comments. We have adjusted the writing style in the manuscript to make it clearer for the reader in the following sections:

Page 3: Abstract Lines 48-49

Measures at T0 (baseline i.e. week 0), T1 (midline i.e. week 14 or 3 months post baseline) and T2 (endline i.e. week 27 or 3 months post midline)

Page 8: Lines 161-167, 170, 172

Recruitment is estimated to take place over an estimated 3 week period. It will include: approaching & sensitization of community leaders; identification and recruitment of interventionists; qualitative data collection (FGD 1) with recruited interventionists, and Identification and recruitment of trial participants.

The data collection timeline as illustrated in Figure 1 will be as follows:

Week 0
Week 14
Week 27

Page 12 and 13: Lines 271-273
(T0, i.e. Week 0), midline (T1, i.e. 3 months post baseline or Week 14) and endline (T2, i.e. 3 months post midline or at Week 27)

Page 16: Line 356
At T1 (at Week 14 of 3 months following baseline)

Page 16: Line 365
T1 midline data collection

Page 17: Line 387
At T2 (endline data collection; week 27 or 3 months post midline)

Page 20: Lines 454-456
T0 (baseline of Week 0), T1 (midline at Week 14 or 3 months post baseline) and T2 (at Week 27 or 3 months post midline) data collection.

REVIEWER 2 COMMENTS
2. Page 16: the authors added mentioning 'contamination questionnaire'.
What is this questionnaire and how are you going to measure the potential contact with trial participants from the intervention cluster?

AUTHORS' COMMENTS
Thank you for this query, a contamination questionnaire, contains questions we ask participants in the control group in order to check if there is any contamination between the intervention and
control group. The questions are: 1) where exactly they stay in the community (in order to establish the distance between the two communities), 2) if they have travelled or visited the community where the intervention is being delivered, (and how many times), and 3) if they have been in contact with any community member who received the 9-cell intervention.

On Page 10: Lines 211-216 and Page 16: Lines 358-363, We have revised the manuscript as follows:

Through discussion with local stakeholders 8 kilometers is anticipated to be adequate distance and corresponding density to reduce possible contamination between the two clusters. However, as an added precaution, the control group will be asked at midline and at endline to establish whether they have visited the community where the intervention took place and if they had a discussion about the 9-cell intervention with any community member who received the intervention.

REVIEWER'S COMMENT
3. Authors added ICC calculation to the study.
   On what quantitative outcome will it be based?

AUTHORS' RESPONSE
Thank you for this query. We have made edits and included the following information in the manuscript:

Page 21: Line 463-464
The ICC will be estimated from each cluster on baseline data for each outcome measure.

REVIEWER'S COMMENT
4. I don't think CONSORT and SPIRIT checklists are really needed for the paper.
   Appropriate mentioning and justification in the text (and references) would be enough.

AUTHORS' COMMENT
Thank you for your suggestion. We have added the following information in the Declarations section of the manuscript as follows:

Page 24: Line 547-548

8. CONSORT statement [1] and SPIRIT statement [2] checklists have been used to guide the formulation of this paper.

*Included in references on Page 27, Lines 672-676
