Reviewer’s report

Title: Pilot Test of an Educational Intervention to Improve Self-management of Diabetes in Persons Living with HIV

Version: 1 Date: 13 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Jean Craig

Reviewer's report:

Main comments

1. The authors have provided some further information to help the reader understand why various outcomes were assessed. However, a complete list of study objectives is needed (just before the methods section) as per CONSORT guidance. Item 2b of this CONSORT publication provides some illustrative examples (available via this link https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=PMC5076380). This then would help set up the methods and, subsequently, the results and discussion.

The aims on their own are not sufficient, for example, it's not clear from the aims why blood tests would be needed. I don't feel that I can fully judge the study quality in the absence of such objectives.

2. I don't understand the new text to justify sample size (p6, line 20). Item 7a on this CONSORT document gives some illustrative examples of justification for sample sizes in feasibility / pilot studies. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=PMC5076380.

3. Reading this for the second time, I wasn't quite sure I understood the argument that the Diabetes Knowledge Test may be a poor fit for this study sample.

4. New text in the abstract (page 2 lines 16 to 19) seems to imply the intention is to change the intervention and then introduce it into clinical practice, whereas the 'next steps' section indicates the intention is to change the intervention and then test it in a fully powered trial.

5. I am not familiar with word count analysis (new text, p6, line 17). A little more detail may help. Is it a technique used within thematic analysis once the data have been coded?
6. Data on the reliability of the questionnaire when used in this study sample (p9 line 2): it's not immediately clear what type of reliability was assessed. I initially wondered if it was inter-reliability or intra-reliability and was looking for a related methods section.

7. The cash incentive would seem to be part of the intervention. Suggest include it in the description of the intervention on page 10

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An article of limited interest

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