Reviewer’s report

Title: Supervised and home-based physical exercise in patients newly diagnosed with multiple myeloma – a randomized controlled feasibility study

Version: 0 Date: 18 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Abigail Fisher

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written and well-designed feasibility study in an important area. There is a strong need for research in this area, and demonstrating that myeloma patients are willing to be recruited just after diagnosis is very valuable. I only have minor comments for clarification.

The use of accelerometers and objective fitness is commendable. Are patient interviews planned? It would be particularly interesting to understand how patients felt about being approached so close to diagnosis and how they felt if randomised to the control condition.

It seemed the information on accelerometers was missing from the methods. In addition, proportion of accelerometer data meeting compliance would be a useful addition to table 4 as useful to know how well they were tolerated by participants.

Regarding the study timeline - recruitment began in June 2015 and the current paper presents data from 30 patients recruited between then and June 2016. The paper was submitted June 2019 stating the trial is still ongoing. One might have expected the main trial to be complete at this stage given the target sample was 102. Some clarification would be useful. Understanding timelines and recruitment are helpful data from a feasibility trial.

Statistical comparison of demographics between intervention and controls seems unnecessary.

Who conducted the assessments? Were these trained researchers? Regarding blinding - was there any indication of how successful this was? It is very difficult to retain blinding in a an exercise trial since patients will often mention having attended the hospital for an exercise session etc. Useful if this was recorded as helps the design of future studies.

Regarding the exercise intervention - who delivered the supervised sessions? Am assuming this was the study physiotherapist, but this could be explicitly stated beginning of the intervention paragraph. In addition, the figure was a little hard to follow so it was a little unclear how the weekly sessions took place. The hashtag seemed to suggest 4 sessions, but the other symbols suggested three. In addition, the fluctuating weekly pattern could have been further clarified.

Re the controls - was there any indication of how many participants took up a physician ordered exercise plan? Potential for contamination in terms of exercise?

Table 4 is a little unclear in terms of ns and labelling.
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