Reviewer’s report

Title: An iterative design process to develop a randomized feasibility study and inform recruitment of minority women after stillbirth

Version: 0 Date: 23 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Lisa Hinton

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to review this paper. It reports on the development phase of a NIH funded 2-phase feasibility study to examine an online yoga intervention to reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress in mothers after stillbirth.

The paper describes an iterative design to i) inform the development of the online yoga intervention and ii) inform recruitment strategies to enrol minority women into phase 2.

The study included ten mothers (5 stillbirth mothers with no yoga experience and 5 non-stillbirth mothers with yoga experience) who were asked to participate in a series of selected yoga videos and assessed for self-compassion and emotional regulation.

Additionally a group of five minority women who had experienced a stillbirth were interviewed on the telephone about cultural barriers to recruitment and their perceptions/opinions of yoga.

My comments on this paper are restricted to the qualitative elements of the study (interviews with minority mothers).

Introduction - this is well described

Methods - generally well described, although I would like to see a little more detail on the selection of the yoga videos (197-103) If some videos were identified during beta testing what was the rationale for adding in additional ones that the research team felt might be suitable?

Recruitment and analysis all described adequately.

Results

p. 13/4. I’m somewhat confused by the filming of additional yoga videos. The results indicate that these were developed, added to the sequence but not reviewed by study participants. Could authors provide more detail as to the rationale for these additions and why they were not reviewed in this phase of the study?

Interview results
These are well described and provide useful insights into the barriers to involving minority women in a yoga intervention study. In particular they provide insights into cultural barriers (p.16) and preferred environment for practicing yoga. The interviews provide useful insights into effective recruitment methods, highlighting the value of using social media routes using trusted sources of information. Participants were also asked about the most appropriate time to approach mothers after a stillbirth. There was wide variation in their answers (from a week to no time limit). Insights were also provided on the design of recruitment materials and incentives.

Discussion

The discussion is well structured with reference to relevant literature. However a couple of points that need addressing:

I am again confused by the development of the new yoga videos (l.446). If these were in response to feedback and results from this phase of work that would make more sense, but this is not clear from the paper.

As acknowledged, this is a very small study. There is detailed reporting of findings from the interviews with little overall evidence of thematic synthesis. But if the intention is to inform the next phase of the overall project these insights are no doubt valuable. It is not clear from this paper if and how the insights from minority women, in particular around recruitment materials and barriers to yoga uptake, have been integrated into the next stage of the study. More details on this are needed in this paper.

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