Author’s response to reviews

Title: Benefits of temporary alcohol restriction: a feasibility randomised trial

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Response to reviewer #2

Note: Our responses are indicated in bold font and revised text in the manuscript is in italics.

1. Page 2, line 29 please insert 'feasibility' before 'outcomes'.

Response: This has been done.

2. Page 11 line 14 'included those measures' (please insert measures). Also change subheading to 'Primary feasibility outcome measures'.

Response: This has been done.

3. Page 12 please change subheading to 'Secondary participant-centred outcome measures' and add a little more detail about each of the questionnaire measures listed that will be used to aid interpretation. Are they validated measures in this population?

Response: This has been done.

4. Page 16 lines 20 and 23 please present percentages in text to whole numbers here (20%, 25%), 2 d.p. are not required.

Response: This has been done.
5. Page 18 line 1 please put p not ps in brackets or delete sentence. Also replace 'ps' with 'p' in other tables, supplementary document and any other text where 'ps' appears.

Response: This has been done on page 18 and throughout the manuscript (four other instances in the supplementary materials, no other instances in the main manuscript).

6. Was consent given by those in non-randomised group (n=7) to use their data in the text/table 1 - if not please remove. If yes then please say so.

Response: Participants who completed the screening assessment provided their consent for the data to be used, even if they subsequently withdrew from the study. This has been clarified (p12):

“Participants provided informed consent (for screening only; this included confirmation that their anonymized screening data would be included in reports)”

7. In Table 3 please replace + . ? with text headings and add a footnote to explain BAC abbreviation. Also please be consistent in using either 1 or 2 d.p. in the table.

Response: This has been done. Note that we had to reformat the table in order to incorporate the required changes into the table.

8. In the Methods (page 15) and Results (page 17) hypothesis tests have been used and p-values given even though they are not recommended in small underpowered studies - rather confidence intervals are preferred (see Eldridge et al PFS 2016 CONSORT extension). Please add a cautionary caveat to this effect in the Methods paragraph and Discussion under limitations so that the reader is clear that these are preliminary results and should be treated with caution in a small underpowered study.

Response: This has been done (p15 and p29-30). In the Discussion section (p29-30), we now state:

“Finally, we reported hypothesis-driven tests to explore group differences in primary feasibility outcomes (compliance with abstinence instructions and with scheduled breathalyser assessments), but results from these tests should be interpreted with caution given that they are not recommended for use in small underpowered feasibility studies (39)”.