Author’s response to reviews

Title: Training attention control of very preterm infants: protocol for a feasibility study of the Attention Control Training (ACT)

Authors:

Oliver Perra (O.Perra@qub.ac.uk)
Sam Wass (S.V.Wass@uel.ac.uk)
Alison McNulty (alison@tinylife.org.uk)
David Sweet (David.Sweet@belfasttrust.hscni.net)
Kostas Papageorgiou (K.Papageorgiou@qub.ac.uk)
Matthew Johnston (matthew.johnston@qub.ac.uk)
Aaron Patterson (apatterson28@qub.ac.uk)
Delfina Bilello (dbilello01@qub.ac.uk)
Fiona Alderdice (fiona.alderdice@npeu.ox.ac.uk)

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Reviewer reports:
Editor's comments:
The revisions seem adequate, however the sample size descriptions doesnot seem consistent with the primary goal of assessing feasibility. It is based on hypothesis testing of effects using 80% power and 0.05 level of significance -- although elsewhere at the beginning of the sample size section there is a suggestion that a confidence interval approach was used. Please check this and ensure that a confidence interval approach (instead of significance testing approach) used to do the calculation is well described properly.

Authors’ reply:

We thank the Editor for this comment and the chance to improve our manuscript. We have acknowledged this issue by changing the paragraph in order to describe the confidence interval approach used adequately. The paragraph changed now reads as follows:

The sample size has been determined using power calculations based on a confidence interval approach described by Cocks and Torgerson (2013). Based on a Cochrane review of interventions involving infancy outcomes of preterm infants (Spittle et al., 2015), we estimated that the standard effect size for a cognitive training programme like ours is likely to be 0.40. The confidence interval approach prescribes a pilot sample size that can produce a one-sided 80% confidence interval upper limit which
excludes the plausible a-priori effect size (0.40), assuming the training effect from the pilot was zero (no difference) or less (favouring the controls). In such a scenario, the sample size required would be 18 participants. We aim to recruit 20 infants in order to allow 10% drop out rate from the study.

We hope this clarifies the approach used adequately and satisfactorily.