Reviewer's report

Title: Pacemaker patients' perception of unsafe activities: a survey

Version: 1 Date: 4 September 2008

Reviewer: Peter Larsen

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This study aimed to find out what activities patients with pacemakers thought were unsafe. A concerning proportion of the patients considered a number of routine activities unsafe, and this did not seem to be related to levels of literacy.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

While one of the stated aims of the study was to investigate the extent to which beliefs restricted functioning, this was not really explored in the paper. No results were reported on the extent to which patients felt limited, and no quality of life measures were applied. Exploring the consequences of the patient’s mistaken beliefs would have added considerably to the paper. This limitation should be acknowledged in the discussion.

There is insufficient detail about pacemaker education prior to implantation, and support for the patients following implantation. While there is a brief statement about who provided pre-implant education, what was covered is not discussed. The results demonstrate that “counselling” did not alter perceptions, but all counselling may not have been equal.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Median household income is reported – it would be useful if this could be compared to a national average for the benefit of international readers. The range of incomes seemed very large – did this relate to levels of knowledge?

The study was conducted at an outpatient pacemaker clinic – it is not clear how many patients were invited to participate, so we do not know the response rate. This could potentially be important.

No definition is given for literate vs illeterate. Was this self-reported illiteracy?

Discretionary Revisions:

The patients had received a pacemaker between less than 1 to 15 years previously. It would have been interesting to examine whether there were any differences in belief associated with this duration.

Presumably these patients attend regular pacemaker clinics (given that this is how they were recruited), but the frequency of these is not given, nor is it stated whether there is any clinician involvement in these clinics. The potential role of
these on-going clinics in providing patient education is not discussed.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.