Reviewer's report

Title: Balancing high accrual and ethical recruitment in paediatric oncology: a qualitative study of the 'look and feel' of clinical trial discussions

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Reviewer: Shaun Treweek

Reviewer's report:

General
This is an interesting and well-written paper, which I enjoyed reading. My comments are relatively minor and are listed below under the headings used by Biomed Central.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

I wondered whether there was a direct link between doctors presenting information about the trial in a way that was incorrect (eg. suggesting that the trial would provide personalised care for the child participating in the trial, rather than helping to provide information to guide personalised care for future children) with parents’ misunderstanding of what the trial was doing. In other words, did parents misunderstand, or were they (probably inadvertently) misled by doctors? It might be worth looking at Ziebland et al ‘Does it matter if clinicians recruiting for a trial don’t understand what the trial is really about? Qualitative study of surgeons experiences of participation in a pragmatic multi-centre RCT’ Trials 2007, 8:4 doi:10.1186/1745-6215-8-4. It is a different type of trial but these authors concluded that ‘...it does matter if clinicians do not understand the rationale for the trial if, as we have shown here, their perception of the trial aims and methods adversely affects who they recruit; if their views affect what the patients are told;...’

What sort of training do the authors think may overcome doctors misunderstanding the aim and design of a trial? This latter point could be raised on p16 in the Discussion.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Methods
Were doctors paid for each participants recruited? My guess is no but it would be good to make this clear.

Procedure
Page 7. ‘Trial recruitment was not a planned focus..’ I think it would be good to say in a few words what the planned focus was in.
How recruitment felt to the parents
Page 13, ‘Only five parents..' I think it would be useful here to write ‘Only five of the 30 parents..' 

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
None

**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