Reviewer's report

Title: An international survey of physicians and dentists regarding clinical trials: A comparison between Kyoto University Hospital and Seoul National University Hospital

Version: 1 Date: 15 November 2012

Reviewer: Brian Egleston

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting study documenting the attitudes of physicians towards clinical trials and their feasibility. The statistics are straight forward and appropriate. The study is largely descriptive in nature.

Minor essential revision

While this is an important study, the conclusions might be a bit too strong. The authors seem to take much of what is stated at face value, which could lead to incorrect conclusions. For example, a physician who is not active in clinical trials research might simply not be interested in running clinical trials at all. However, there might be social and professional pressure to be active in clinical trials. Such pressure might lead physicians to respond to a survey in socially desirable ways that indicate a false willingness to participate in clinical trial research, but also to cite spurious reasons why they do not engage in the process (for example, lack of infrastructure). It is possible that anonymous surveys would not overcome this process. If the underlying problem is a lack of desire to participate, then building an infrastructure will not solve the problem, and could even be an expensive waste of time. As the English saying goes, a man (or woman) can lead a horse to water, but he (or she) cannot make the horse drink the water. It could be that closely tying salary increases to clinical trial accrual could have a bigger impact on physician behavior than building an infrastructure. Hence, while the survey certainly contains hypothesis generating results, future research is needed to understand if interventions to address some of the stated concerns truly change physician behavior and participation in clinical trials research. Ideally, such interventions, such as an intervention to improve clinical trial infrastructure, would start as small targeted pilot programs to test feasibility and efficacy. Once feasibility and efficacy were demonstrated, more widespread implementation of programs could be implemented.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.