Reviewer’s report

Title: Blood spots as an alternative to whole blood collection and the effect of a small monetary incentive to increase participation in genetic association studies

Version: 3 Date: 7 September 2009

Reviewer: Liz Milne

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript is greatly improved.

Minor Essential Revisions

I have a few relatively minor additional comments.

The years of the USRT and sub-study should be included in the Methods section.

The first sentence of the second paragraph in the Background is not strictly correct, as the 'randomized trial' was not to determine if blood spot collection would increase participation (aim 1), but to determine whether the incentive made a difference (aim 2). The sentence is misleading as it currently stands.

I think it is worth mentioning that blood spots appeared to be less likely to be done by smokers and younger participants (both cases and controls) (Table 1), even though these results were not 'statistically significant'. This was the point I was trying to make in my original point 3. In addition, could the somewhat elevated ORs for women who had an occupational radiation dose >0.06 Gy be confounded by age (and therefore greater time exposed)? This should be mentioned, even though the numbers are small.

On the same subject, the authors say they have removed the 2 references to "statistical significance". But there are still 5 or 6 references to "significant difference", which is really the same thing. I understand this it common terminology, but it is not one that I endorse or favour (for the reasons illustrated in the previous comment). However, I will leave this to the authors to take on board and do as they wish.

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