Reviewer’s report

Title: Rating general practitioner consultation performance in cancer care: does the specialty of assessors matter? A simulated consult study

Version: 2 Date: 25 August 2014

Reviewer: Marija Petek ter

Reviewer’s report:

I read the article about the assessment of general practitioners consultation performance in cancer care by general practitioners and oncologist with great interest. The aim of the study is not totally clear. I am not totally convinced by the authors about the meaning of the study results for practice. As a general practitioner I could understand, that communication skills in general practitioners are probably better than in oncologist (communication skills are of outmost importance for working in general practice and a lot of effort is put during the training and CME to improve consultation skills), and assessors with higher level of expertise on a topic are probably more critical.

I appreciate that the authors in a section discussion explain more in details, why is this study important for the practice. I agree with the authors, that the future research will be needed to put the meaning of the findings of the present research into context, but anyway the aim need to be clarified.

Anyway, the presented study has some merits (well written introduction, exact presentation of methods and clear results section with precise statistical analyses).

I have also some minor comments:

• You use both terms actor – patient and simulated patient. It seems to me, that actor - patient is simulated patient. It would be better to use only one term (with in advance explanation of the meaning)
• Explanation of the scenarios would be better put in appendix.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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’ below.