Reviewer's report

Title: A Descriptive Study of Older Adults with Persistent Pain: Use and Perceived Effectiveness of Pain Management Strategies [ISRCTN-CCT-NAPN-11230]

Version: 1 Date: 31 July 2005

Reviewer: Robert D Helme

Reviewer's report:

General This study reports the use and perceived efficacy of pain management strategies in a sample of older people using a non-validated measure called by them a Pain Management Strategies Survey. They would have been wise to cast their literature review net wider so as to incorporate a validated measure already in the literature (Kung et al The Pain Clinic 12, 299, 2000). They could also have cited further papers by Kung, including perhaps Kung et al 2000 (The Pain Clinic 12,193) and Kung et al 2000 (The Journal of Pain 1, 293, 2000). Two other thoughts arise from reading the study: firstly, the most effective treatment of pain from degenerative disease in older people is joint replacement. This is not included by the authors yet is so effective it stands as a marker for comparing the effectiveness of other treatments. Secondly, the first reference to religious thoughts and pain to my knowledge was by Corran in 1994 Corran et al Proceedings of the 7th World Congress on Pain p895). Otherwise the study is reasonable in design and analysis.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) Incorporation of comments relevant to the above cited literature

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I am a co-author of the publications which I have cited as being relevant to this study but which have been overlooked by the authors