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: 1 August 2005

Reviewer: Ingalill Rahm R Hallberg

Reviewer’s report:

General
In general this is a well written paper concerning pain management strategies in people 65 years old or above. The design is sound, the presentation is logical although I do have some concerns about the result section

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
In the aim it is said that age and gender should be investigated which is important in a sample of this kind. However, sample demographics (table 1) and pain locations (table 2) does not present data distribution in relation to gender and age. This is important since differences in this respect may confound the analyses of pain management strategies.

Also, in table 3, some errors in the presentation need to be corrected - for instance it is not clear what is presented in column 5, is it percent and if so percent of what - percent is said to be within brackets but figures within brackets is not presented?

Also, in the result section, non significant data is presented, either as a trend or as significant, p-value 0.05. It should be accepted that these statistics do show non significant data - ie not twist the interpretation in the direction of thinking it is significant

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Throughout in the result section terms like: most, a majority, some is used. This type of valuation of the data is not acceptable in a result section. It is more appropriate to use the exact figures.

Some language errors; page 5 last paragraph first sentence, page 11, fifth row from the bottom of the last para - something is missing

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
perhaps it would be interesting to know or address if the participants was aware of all the pain management strategies available?

Also, perhaps it would be interesting to know if the 71 individuals admitted after the baseline assessment might impose any kind of bias to the results

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

no competing interests