Reviewer's report

Title: Applying strategies from libertarian paternalism to decision making for prostate specific antigen (PSA) screening

Version: 1 Date: 6 January 2011

Reviewer: Kenneth Lin

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this is a strong piece. The authors present a methodical and convincing argument for using a libertarian paternalism approach to PSA screening for prostate cancer. I agree with their analysis of the deficiencies of the "shared decision making" paradigm, and they do a good job of outlining the essentials of LP approach before applying it to prostate cancer screening.

Major compulsory revisions
1. The authors should replace reference #4 with direct references to the 3 major guidelines on PSA screening: the US Preventive Services Task Force (2008), the American Urological Association (2009), and the American Cancer Society (2010). Not mentioning the USPSTF, which is considered to be the most evidence-based of the three, is a major omission.

Discretionary revisions
2. Pages 9-12 go over examples of the default decision, framing, and timing. This is necessary information, but it could be condensed quite a bit and the non-clinical examples (e.g. company retirement savings plan) eliminated.

3. The authors are unnecessarily defensive on p. 14 about their default choice of no PSA screening. Most of us have heard of primum non nocere.

4. Although this is perhaps beyond the scope of this paper, it would be useful for the authors to briefly comment on the practicality of implementing this approach in primary care practices, especially requiring the patient to wait 1-2 weeks before choosing PSA screening. I can't think of an analogous test or procedure where we do this for patients.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.