Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessing awareness of colorectal cancer symptoms: Measure development and results from a population survey in the UK

Version: 1 Date: 4 January 2011

Reviewer: Minhhuyen Nguyen

Reviewer’s report:

This is a clearly written paper presenting two inter-related studies on the subject of public awareness of colorectal cancer symptoms, signs and risks. The first study consists of three small validation studies for the measure, CRC CAM, used to gauge colorectal cancer awareness. The second study uses the same validated measure in a population survey.

Discretionary Revisions

Overall, the study designs to validate the CRC CAM appear adequate and the authors have already discussed their limitations in terms of various modes of testing and limited demographic representation. However, the number of study participants included in the validation samples is small (49 for sample 1 and 70 for sample 2, which was divided in half for educational intervention). The combined samples 1 and 2 to assess internal validity have a large number.

It would be interesting to see (1) if there’s any correlation between the level of awareness of CRC symptoms and risks and the level of education in study participants and (2) whether the level of education in study participants exerts any impact on intervention (especially in the unprompted questions). Social Economic Group (SEG) was extensively discussed but the correlation between SEG and education level can only be inferred and not explicitly stated.

Minor Essential Revisions:

In the segment about women and their awareness of CRC risk factors, the percentage of their awareness (vs. men’s) might have been reported in a reverse fashion for the symptom of “pain in the back passage” (Results section, page 15).

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.