Reviewer's report

Title: A Systematic Review of Symptom Assessment Scales in Children with Cancer

Version: 2 Date: 5 July 2012

Reviewer: Kristina Hardy

Reviewer's report:

In their revision, the authors have systematically and efficiently addressed the Major and Discretionary Revisions suggested by both reviewers, resulting in an improved manuscript. In particular, the addition of Table 2 greatly enhances the accessibility and utility of information in the manuscript. The only suggestion I might make with regard to Table 2, as a Discretionary Revision, is whether the authors could consider relabeling the third column of Table 2 something akin to “Items/Domains,” and then list the items for those with <15 (as they already have done), and then domain or construct names for those measures with too many items to list. For example, they may list “pain, fatigue, psychosocial distress” as content areas rather than items. To avoid confusion, perhaps the items could be listed in bold, and the domains listed in italics (or some similar distinction; e.g., Items/Domains). There may certainly be a better way to modify the table, but it would be nice if there were some way to indicate the major symptom categories covered by the Dupuis, MSAS, RSCL, and TRSC-C questionnaires. Given the larger number of items on these measures, they may be preferable to providers who are interested in evaluating a wider scope of symptoms, and having some idea of this scope would be useful.

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

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 not competing interests.