Reviewer's report

Title: Integrative Oncology for Breast Cancer Patients: Introduction of an expert-based Model

Version: 1 Date: 28 May 2012

Reviewer: Eran Ben-Arye

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Introduction: Please refer to literature regarding CAM use in breast cancer patients in Germany. You are advised to specify the most prevalent CAM modalities used in Germany concerning integrative oncology (e.g. herbal medicine, anthroposophic medicine, TCM). The theme regarding MBM should be moved from the discussion to the introduction.

2. You need to re-format the manuscript headings – there is a disturbing gap between the introduction and the discussion session. You may want to elaborate more on the process that led to the establishment of your integrative oncology program in a new section of "Methods". Also, consider to present your clinical model in the "Results" section. You need to provide details on the actual process of diagnosis, formulation of IO treatment plan, communication with oncologists, assessment and monitoring of QOL, etc.

3. Discussion – here you need to compare your model (following detailed presentation in the "Results" section) to other IO models worldwide. Useful models that can be compared are as follows:

Minor essential revisions:
1. When describing your IO project, use the abbreviation CIM instead of CAM (I assume that you do not consider your practice as "alternative").
2. Provide more details on the assessment questionnaire you use.
3. Reflect at the conclusion of discussion on limitations and challenges of your
4. I congratulate you on your courageous statement: "Therefore the scientific gold-standard of randomized controlled trials only insufficiently addresses relevant questions regarding outcomes of whole system strategies. Well-designed observational studies might enhance our understanding....". Please elaborate more on your statement and provide arguments that support this important statement. You may also present the methodological dilemmas regarding the preferred clinical design needed in IO research. Also present contradictory attitudes (e.g. approach of CIM researchers such as Claudia Witt in Germany in favor of RCT’s in acupuncture trials).

5. Reflect on the reasons why well-established CIM modalities such as Anthroposophic medicine (Viscum album treatment in particular) are lacking in your center.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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