Reviewer's report

Title: Monitoring physical and psychosocial symptom trajectories in ovarian cancer patients receiving chemotherapy

Version: 1 Date: 9 November 2011

Reviewer: Ulrich Wedding

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions:
The HADS score reports symptoms of depression but does not diagnose depression. The authors report correctly, that it is a screening tool and not a diagnostic tool. Thus the study can assess with the HADS the course of depressive symptoms not of depression.

The authors report that data reach nearly those of a general population. However comparison with the general population is not reported as part of methodology. The comparison with normal population is part of the quality of this trial and should be reported in more detail. Population data are available for (most) of the used scores.

Reporting of selection of patients is incomplete. At what time did the study start? At what time was the last patient included? How many patients fulfilled the inclusion criteria? How many were asked to participate? How many agreed? All in all a consort table is missing.

It is important to know the course of the disease for interpretations of results. Did all patients remain free of tumour during the 9 months? 57.1% of patients had residual disease after surgery.

Table 2: CT1 should be named baseline. Normal population data should be reported in a separate column.

Table 3: Gender specific data of general population are available.

Table 4: Source of reference values has to be reported

Minor revisions:

Background: The reported number of patients diagnosed with OC in 2008 is interesting but the reviewer doubts that it is really exact. Most of the countries do not have a cancer registry collecting data of all newly diagnosed patients with OC.

Methods: The reviewer does not understand why an upper age limit for recruitment of 85 years was chosen. However as the oldest included patients was 74 years old, this does nor really matter.

Reporting of Karnofsky-Performance-Status or ECOG-PS is missing. As it is a major confounder of HRQoL it should be included.

Regarding missing results, the authors report only that they could not use the
Sexual Functioning scale due to missing data.
Results: Page 11: The EORTC-QLQ-C30 does not have 11 functional scales.
Citation of reference 22 and 51 should be updated. Reference 34 and 37 have the same first authors however the name is cited differently. Reference 35 Greimel ER would be correct.
Figures: The description should contain the explanations of abbreviations.

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