Reviewer's report

Title: Self-reported needs, interests, physical activity, and nutrition habits of breast cancer survivors: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 14 November 2012

Reviewer: Corina Guethlin

Reviewer's report:

This is a cross-sectional study reporting on data from patients in a breast cancer clinic in Switzerland. Although the topic of supportive care in breast cancer patients is of relevance, I am not sure that the readership of BMC Cancer would be interested in a survey of N=342 patients out of one breast cancer center. The survey rather briefly asked about physical activity (none/once per week/ more than once per week), attention to eating habits (yes/no), use of CAM (yes/no) and information needs.

In case that the manuscript will undergo a revision I would like to see the following revisions:

1) Major Compulsory Revisions

Title: delete “needs” as the study does not cover needs, why “breast cancer survivors”. Is this study not about patients from a hospital?

Statistical Analyses

“to correlate”. This is a regression model looking for predictors. Please be precise as to what you did.

Please rewrite the section about the sample size calculation together with an experienced statistician with sufficient knowledge of the English language. Examples of misleading parts are: What is meant by “higher response group”, WTI is mentioned as the outcome but Table 2 rather suggests that use or attention was the relevant outcome.

Results:

PA

From the data I would conclude that the binary outcome was none/once per week + more than that. Please be precise.

Diet

Diet seems to have been operationalized as “paying attention to eating habits”. It is unclear how patients answered this item. Would eating more slowly lead to them tick “yes”? Would that entail adhering to a “diet”?

CAM
It remains totally unclear how CAM use was asked for. Please give detailed information on this part of the study.

Indeed, I would be interested in predictors for uptake of programs rather then predictors for doing the activities.

Discussion:

“physical activity” was above … expected. Where did the expectation come from? Literature?

Interestingly … reduced stress. This result was not reported beforehand, but is mentioned in the discussion.

Table 1:

How was mood measured?

Table 2:

How many patients are in the group of “physical activity/yes”. Please add numbers.

Please add numbers to the figures.

References: Please add citations from BMC Cancer in order to underscore relevance of your paper for the audience of the journal.

2) Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

There are a lot of language problems which make the text difficult to understand. Examples are:

“institutional programs”: What is meant here?

Trial participation: trial refers to clinical trials, this is a cross-sectional study

Self-explaining questionnaire: Probably would be “self-administered”.

“readiness to present for come”: is totally unclear.

Complaisance is probably not understandable to readers.

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

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests