Reviewer's report

Title: Perceived Benefits and Barriers to Exercise for Recently Treated Patients with Multiple Myeloma: A Qualitative Study

Version: 2 Date: 27 February 2013

Reviewer: Gill Mein

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions
I felt the data in this paper was potentially very interesting and of interest. However the paper would benefit from considerable reviewing on several levels.

The abstract needs to include more detail. It would benefit from including the place and year of the data collection, and that the data was collected over the telephone. The abstract should also mention the grounded theory approach was used as this is stated further on in the methods section of the paper. The abstract also includes the abbreviations SCT without explaining the meaning. It is not very clear in the abstract if this is an intervention study.

Overall the paper could benefit from far greater depth of detail. It would have more impact if fear quotes were given but more details about the context surrounding each quote. The quotes do not benefit from being listed with simply dotted lines separating them.

Under the section entitled measures. It is not clear if the interviews were done on the telephone. Surely it would be helpful if the grounded theory approach was mentioned here? Table 1 could be omitted as it was not very informative - this could be included in the text.

Some detail on the difference between the treatments of MM would help for those readers not familiar with the illness.

In the results section the unit of measurement is needed for physical activity e.g. what determines if the activity is vigorous, moderate or mild?

The paper would benefit from using fewer quotes and giving more context around fewer quotes rather than a list of quotes - of which not all were very illuminating. some of the quotes did not seem to fit well under the subtitles given, but this may be resolved using fewer quotes and reorganising the subsections.

The authors need to be careful of the use of "all" referring to the participants in a qualitative analysis. In particular the authors stated that "all" the participants enjoyed being physically active when a previous quote contradicted this.

The section entitled Perceived Barriers to Physical Activity would benefit from having subsections with more detail e.g. fatigue. As stated previously fewer quotes would improve the paper. The authors should also give each quote a form of individual identification e.g. a number, or pseudonym in addition to the detail
given this would enable the reader to see if the quotes are being used from the same person.

In the section entitled "Low self motivation" the first list of dialogue from the transcript does not appear to comply from an interview using a grounded theory approach, it appears the interviewee is asking a leading question and suggesting the participant may lack motivation rather than the participant mentioning this unprompted.

Similarly the second list of dialogue seems to merge the difference of lack of motivation and lack of interest in physical activity. This difference should be explained in more detail.

The discussion would benefit from a comparison of activity levels with the same age groups in the general population. Also please could the authors confirm if it is possible to use a grounded theory approach using interviews by telephone. Paragraph six in the discussion is unclear. The meaning of "instrumental" values is not clear and would benefit from some explanation. The section on limitations should also include telephone interviews as a potential limitation to the data collected.

**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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests.