Reviewer's report

Title: The JACS prospective cohort study of newly diagnosed women with breast cancer investigating joint and muscle pain, aches, and stiffness: pain and quality of life at baseline

Version: 1

Date: 30 December 2013

Reviewer: Ali Montazeri

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to read and review an interesting manuscript. In general the paper reports on an important topic that affects quality of life in women with breast cancer and thus merits publication. However, there are a number of shortcomings with this manuscript that should be solved before its publication. I highlight some as follows:

1. General statements such as 'Breast cancer affects one in eight women' should be avoided or should be indicate where.

2. The authors only present the baseline data. One expects at least they include baseline and three months follow-up data.

3. Figures for sample are confusing. This should be corrected. For instance in the abstract the authors report 543 patients (28%), in the Figure 1 they report 795 eligible patients while the sum is 796 (225+116+455). Most importantly they report 455 as 57%.

4. The Results should be reported separately from the Discussion. At present it is difficult to follow the manuscript.

5. A section on limitation should be added to the Discussion.

6. The authors should discuss the findings more broadly in terms of geographic area. Perhaps looking at the literature in some other parts of the world might help to have a better understanding on the topic. For instance the authors might wish to consult the following literature:


- Factors predicting the use of complementary and alternative therapies among cancer patients in Iran. European Journal of Cancer Care 2007; 16: 144-149.


7. The sub-scales for the SF-36 reads as follows and these should be corrected both in the text and in the Tables:
Physical functioning, Role physical, Role emotional, Bodily pain, General health, Vitality, Social functioning, and Mental health.

8. The Conclusion in the text goes beyond the findings and in fact starts to discuss again on the topic, even giving references. The references should be removed and the text should be revised.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'.