Reviewer’s report

Title: The impact of a cancer diagnosis on weight change: findings from prospective, population-based cohorts in the UK and the US

Version: 3 Date: 16 September 2014

Reviewer: Sheri J. Hartman

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting study examining changes in weight in 2 large population-based cohorts of older adults of cancer survivors and cancer-free controls. This manuscript has many strengths including the use of prospective data, replication of findings in two cohorts, and examining differences by pre-diagnosis weight status. Despite the strengths of this study there are a few limitations and concerns.

What is missing for me is an explanation of the significance of these findings, in light of the many limitations. The meaningfulness of your main finding, that obese cancer survivors are more likely to lose weight, is difficult to interpret as the authors point out that for some this could mean greater mortality risk some and for others this could be reducing their risk. I think this manuscript would be strengthened if more focus was given to importance and usefulness of these findings.

Additionally, in the introduction you state that a previous study found differences between men and women. Why for this study did you control for sex and not look at sex differences?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests