Reviewer's report

Title: A survey of patient preference for colorectal cancer screening technique

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Reviewer: Geertruida de bock

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General
This is a study in the field of patient and consumer preferences. The aim of this paper is to determine differential public preferences for colorectal cancer screening modalities. The conclusion is that efforts to increase public participation in colorectal cancer screening may be more effective if undertaken in the context of public perceptions of screening choices, i.e. fecal occult blood testing is more preferred than the others and that should be offered.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The information regarding the test that is given to the patient / consumer. In this study the information that is presented to patients / consumers is limited to the experience a patient /consumer will have when the test is performed. Of course this is very important, when we want to know how patients / consumers value these tests. However, test characteristics, and maybe more important the positive and negative value of a test for that specific patient / consumer group are not considered in the patient / consumer information. How can a patient / consumer in fully informed consent decide which test is preferable if information regarding test characteristics is not presented? Physicians who are fully informed about the test prefer colonoscopy (page 7, discussion). I wonder what patients / consumers will prefer if they are fully informed about these diagnostic tests. At least in the discussion and abstract and conclusion it should be mentioned that these patients were asked to value these tests whereas they were only partially informed about these tests (unless the authors have very good reasons why their design is the way it is).

2. The 100% respons rate suggest there might be bias. Who were the ones that were not willing to answer this questionnaire and how many there were? 100% respons rate is impossible.

Some minor points:
3. I would prefer to see the data of the whole study group in Table I (instead of the data of a subsample of patients)
4. I think the authors should present the median of their data instead of the mean. The mean is very difficult to understand in this data.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
I would prefer a more structured introduction. What is known already (from medical point of view / from patient / consumers point of view). Which knowledge is lacking. What this survey will add to our knowledge.
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

none