Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding the Attitudes of the Elderly Towards Cancer, its Management and Enrolment into Cancer Clinical Trials

Version: 1 Date: 24 October 2005

Reviewer: Marcello Tamburini

Reviewer's report:

The high level of no-responders preclude the generalizability of the results. Ninety-four of 425 questionnaires mailed were returned compiled (22%). Seventeen of the 94 survey responded accepted to be interviewed (16%).

Authors should have identified sample selection criteria for qualitative study instead of accepting patients self-selection. No data are reported on the sample heterogeneity as regards education level, health status which are important factors to evaluate the results.

As reported by the Authors the qualitative study shows patients' misunderstandings about clinical trials and what participation would entail. This makes it difficult to interpret the preferences expressed in the questionnaire.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? No. What about the health characteristics of this small sample?
3. Are the data sound and well controlled? No, there are too many missing.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? No (see above).
6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? No, What about the patients' attitudes toward cancer as reported in the title?
7. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests