Reviewer's report

Title: Skin surveillance intentions among family members of patients with melanoma

Version: 3 Date: 20 August 2011

Reviewer: Peter Hull

Reviewer's report:

Original Review.

“According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, performance of a behaviour is a joint function of intentions and perceived behavioural control. The later aspect does not appear to have been adequately discussed in this study but it clearly is inherent in the barriers identified. As perceived barriers are a significant factor in not performing a SSE, these barriers should be described in more detail and identified. They could be targeted in order to effect changes in behaviour.”

The authors have attempted to address this concern and have listed a number of perceived barriers.

“The most commonly reported barriers to TCE were: not feeling it necessary to have a TCE unless the person noticed an abnormal growth; inconvenience; embarrassment; and the financial cost. The most commonly reported barriers to SSE were: lack of knowledge of what to look for when doing SSE; preferring a doctor or other health professional check for signs of skin cancer; lack of confidence in how to perform SSE; and not being sure what skin cancer would look like.”

These general statements are in keeping with many other studies. What is not clear is how these barriers were identified in this cohort. While the intention side of behavior is carefully analyzed there is no supporting statistical evaluations of any of these statements regarding perceived behavior control.

This cohort of first degree relatives have, by the very selection process, failed to transform intention into behavior. Intention in this group does not appear to be enough of a motivator. Identifying barriers seems more significant than identifying “intentions” and this aspect should be analyzed in greater detail.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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