Reviewer's report

Title: Motives for participating in a clinical research trial: a pilot study in Brazil

Version: 2 Date: 17 October 2012

Reviewer: Jennifer Hunter

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer’s comments: Motives for participating in a clinical research trial: a pilot study in Brazil

Thank you for asking me to review this interesting and important paper. The research question is well structured and the methods are generally appropriate. However, I have two major concerns about the analysis that need to be addressed before I could recommend publishing this paper. A few other minor questions require further clarification.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

Results

I presume the interviews were conducted in Portuguese; however, the quotes are presented in English. Information about the translations should be provided – was it done by the researchers or a professional translator?

1) Qualitative analysis:

I disagree with the coding and analysis that claims access to healthcare was only mentioned by the KIs. The previous quote regarding financial reimbursement from a study participant included: “...have confidence in the place and it is good because they do several examinations, and I a find out about how my health is.” Surely, this is an example of access to healthcare. The participant is perceiving benefit from the reassurance of a thorough medical check-up. Healthcare services include screening for disease and preventative medicine, and this would be more relevant to healthy volunteers in Phase I studies and perhaps those of higher socio-economic groups and with more education who are known to be bigger consumers of preventative medicine. I recommend the original data is recoded and reanalysed to include this type of healthcare.

2) Quantitative analysis:

I have some reservations about the analysis and interpretation of data presented in Table 5 and I recommend a formal review from a qualified statistician. The Fisher’s exact test may not be the most appropriate test. Perhaps the socioeconomic groups should be collapsed to combine A and B, and D and E. This would get rid of the zero scores in some categories and Chi squared tests could then be used. It is important to get this right to support the authors’ discussion and conclusion.
Discussion

The authors comment that “Individuals from higher socioeconomic classes were more likely to cite altruism as a secondary motivator after economic advantage (Phase I) or therapeutic option (Phase III). This is new data that was not presented in the analysis. Please present this data in the analysis because it is important to the authors’ argument about ‘human guinea-pigs’ in Brazilian clinical trials.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS / QUESTIONS

Methods

3) in 2.2 please explain what is meant by “systematically selected”.
4) in 2.4/6 I presume the Key Informant interviews were also recorded and transcribed. This could be stated more clearly.
5) in 2.6 what language were the interviews conducted in?
6) in 2.6.1 how were differences in coding by the researchers tested or resolved?

I would like to encourage the authors to address these issues rather than withdraw the paper to submit elsewhere. The paper is well structured and clearly presented, and the research is important and relevant to the readers of BMC Public Health.

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