Reviewer’s report

Title: Awareness of signs and symptoms of cancer and barriers to seeking medical help in Scottish adolescents: a cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: Sara Macdonald

Reviewer’s report:

This is a good well-written and clear paper. I have no significant issues with the paper but there are a number of issues that, if dealt with, I think would improve the paper. First, as the authors rightly point out little has been written about adolescent help-seeking and as such the use of measures designed for adults seems sensible. However, I was a little confused about whether the authors wanted to use their data to predict adolescent help-seeking while they were adolescents or if they were suggesting that this laid the ground work for future appropriate help-seeking. I think this needs to be made clearer because I wonder is cancer in adolescents presents in the same way as with adults? Some common adult cancers which the measures hope to tease out are less common in adolescents? Related to this the authors - rightly - consider experience of cancer in the family as an important indicator or awareness and while they break this down into ‘Closeness’ this is not described in the results. I wonder if a 12 year old who had a grandparent with cancer is more aware than a 12 year old with a sibling or parent? I also wonder if some more justification could be given for why the authors chose 12 year olds.

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 I have no competing interests