Reviewer's report

Title: From the set-up of a screening program of breast cancer patients to the identification of the first BRCA mutation in the DR Congo

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Reviewer: Marisa Mena

Reviewer's report:

Comments to Author

The authors raise an important public health problem, breast cancer early detection in Africa, for which there is still a considerable gap in knowledge. Thus, the information they provide is important and sound. However, since they come though different areas of the therapeutic chain (breast cancer awareness program, early detection, and genetic characteristics of some of the breast cancer cases found), the manuscript is sometimes not well-structured, the design and methodology not accurately described, and some key information are missing which motivate a request for major revision.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

Abstract: Some information on the breast cancer awareness campaign should be mention in the methods paragraph

Introduction section:
• Data from Globocan 2012 or another more updated source should be used when presenting the age adjusted annual incidence and mortality rates for breast cancer
• Specific information about breast cancer in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which can be also obtained from Globocan 2012, is needed

Methods section:
• The section is not well structured. It should be indicated that the study design was built up according to the WHO framework but then put more emphasis on the study design, the setting, the strategy, the recruitment procedures, inclusion and exclusion criteria if any…
• The program needs to be explained with more details. How were recruited the health care staff and the women from the general population to participate in the study? Were the health care workers from some specific centers? Which was the duration and contents of the training?
• The authors explain that the “breast awareness” education was realized by the use of posters on which breast self-examination was explained, but also that one of the channels was the radio, where the participants are not able to see the poster…clarification on this point and more details on how the content of the
message given to the participants is needed
• The sessions organized for couples need to be explained with more details, what were the men taught about?
• Ethical issues: No informed consent was required from the participants?
• Were the health care workers and women from the general population evaluated somehow in order to assess the gained knowledge? If not, that should be mentioned in the limitations section

Results section:
• Some results are already presented in the methods section and should be replaced in the appropriate section (e.g. case report)
• It should be more specified where each group of women visited the campaign, how the counting of the participants was made
• Regarding the objective 2, more demographic information about Kinshasa should be presented

Discussion section:
• The discussion should be separated from the results section. Most of the information presented in the conclusions section should be replaced at the discussion section and conclusions thus should be shorter, just a summary of the main findings and message and recommendations that the authors want to give to the readers

References:
• The references are very few, and some not really updated ones. Recent papers on breast awareness strategies in Africa should be presented (e.g. Abruidis et al, The Lancet Oncology 2013, Mena et al, International Journal of Cancer 2013…) and discussed in relation to the results of the study

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS
• Article requires appropriate editing for English at a number of places

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS
• Tables summarizing the specific information collected from the participants (e.g. those with lesions) would help to visualize the results

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests