Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessment of the general public knowledge about rheumatic diseases: evidence from a Portuguese population-based survey

Version: 1 Date: 6 April 2010

Reviewer: Cesar Ramos-Remus

Reviewer’s report:

I reviewed manuscript entitled “assessment of the general public’s knowledge about rheumatic diseases: evidence from a Portuguese population-based Surrey, from Severo et al.

This is a cross-sectional population survey.

Major Compulsory Revisions,

a) The manuscript is difficult to follow. There is a mixture in the aims of the study, results and conclusions: This is a cross-sectional study, although individuals were identified during a previous unrelated cohort study. It is stated that the authors aimed to identify “the gaps in the overall knowledge about rheumatic diseases in the general population and to identify target groups for health education”, but methods section seems to assess internal consistency of the questionnaire, and no method were used to “identify the gaps” or “identify target groups.

b) Authors used a previously reported questionnaire constructed by others, in a foreign language. Please add information regarding cross-cultural adaptation to Portuguese, and its validation.

c) 32% of the participant individuals self-reported a rheumatic disease. The authors mix results from these rheumatic patients –that have already information from a physician- with individuals from general population. It biases their results.

d) This study cannot “confirmed that it is important that educational programs…are centred in the eldest and low educated…” (page 7, paragraph5, line7)

e) The authors do not acknowledge limits, biases and confounders of their study.

f) The authors missed important information on education. It seems that the authors do not acknowledge differences between information, learning, knowledge, beliefs, and interpretative structures. The authors should read Lorig K articles on this regards, or Ramos-Remus et al. (How important is patient education? Baillieres Best Pract Res Clin Rheumatol. 2000 Dec;14(4):689-703.) to enrich their discussion.

Minor essential revisions:
a) English language needs improvement in the entire manuscript

b) Please review each reference for typo errors (e.g. Brekke rather than Berkke in reference 2) and modify journal's name (e.g. Arthritis Rheum or Arthritis & Rheumatism, rather than “Arthritis and rheumatism”.) and book references.

c) Please modify SD to ± rather than “=” if you use two tailed SD

d) Please find another word for “gaps”

e) Table 1 can be improved

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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' below