Reviewer’s report

Title: A randomised controlled trial of the use of aromatherapy and hand massage to reduce disruptive behaviour in people with dementia

Version: 2 Date: 23 October 2012

Reviewer: Leon Flicker

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
This is a well performed randomized trial with largely negative results. In fact the intervention may have had negative consequences to the control group.

I have a couple of major suggestions to improve the article.

1. The patient who died or data were missing because of subsequent withdrawal should be included. The flow chart is confusing. Were there two groups of 6 participants who withdrew/died? Reference 10 relates to primary prevention which is far removed from this study type and does not justify the lack of inclusion of these subjects in an intervention trial.

2. It is very difficult to discern the actual effects on the primary efficacy variable. Please define the primary efficacy variables and I imagine the test statistic is change for baseline. Please present the mean changes from baseline of the primary efficacy variable with SD for the 3 groups at the various time points.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

no conflicts of interest