Reviewer's report

**Title:** Characteristics and quality of life of patients presenting to cancer support centres: Patient rated outcomes and use of complementary therapies

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 27 February 2013

**Reviewer:** Doreen Oneschuk

**Reviewer's report:**

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Please incorporate "SolarisCare" into the title i.e. Characteristics and quality of life of patients presenting to SolarisCare cancer support centres.

2. Background, first paragraph: The Australian statistics for new cases of cancer diagnosed and survival rates are somewhat dated i.e. 2005 and 2004 respectively. Are more recent statistics not available?

3. Background, 3rd paragraph: Statement: "These sessions are carefully supervised and therapists (add here 'are') selected to ensure patient's physical and psychological safety; no medical misadventure has occurred in 11 years' practice." Recommend different term than "misadventure."

4. Background, 3rd paragraph: "Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine medical and demographic characteristics and patient rated outcomes (PROs) on individuals receiving complementary therapies at (remove 'a') SolarisCare care.....

5. Methods, 3rd paragraph: Recommend separate subtitle for Statistical Analysis

6. Results; Participant Characteristics and Complementary Therapy Use: General Recommendation: provide numerical values in addition to percentages for reported results.

7. Results; Participant Characteristics and Complementary Therapy Use: 1st paragraph: Change to "Forty three percent of the population had metastases. The more common......"

8. Results; Patient Rated Outcomes, 1st paragraph: Indentify source of Australian based mixed cancer and population norms (Reference 1?)

9. Results, 3rd paragraph: "This supports previous findings by Syrjala and colleagues...." These statements should be moved to the Discussion Section.

10. Discussion, 2nd paragraph: "As expected the cancer population....." Agree, easy to assume "as expected," however, please provide some confirmatory statements as to why.

"It is notable that only one variable, GH, was significantly different between
males and females." Please speculate as to why.

Briefly discuss further Baker and colleagues' findings of more problems reported by younger survivors. Again, provide brief speculations as to why.

11. Discussion, last paragraph: Provide r squared value to support the statement, "Musculoskeletal symptoms helped to explain 25% of the variance in respondents' score...."

12. Figures 1 and 2: Titles required in addition to labelling of x axis and y axis.

12. Discussion, General Statement: Study Limitations should be identified, for example, limited duration of the study to only 5 days, potential influences of some authors working for the Solaris Care research team, etc.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.