Reviewer’s report

Title: Testing a Spanish-language colorectal cancer screening decision aid in Latinos with limited English proficiency: results from a pre-post trial and four month follow-up survey

Version: 1 Date: 13 March 2012

Reviewer: Joseph Diaz

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General:
I appreciate the invitation to review this interesting manuscript which reports the testing of a Spanish-language colorectal cancer (CRC) decision aid among Latinos with limited English proficiency (LEP). Given the potentially confusing myriad of CRC screening options available to patients and the CRC screening disparities that exist between non-Latino and Latinos, especially those with LEP, this decision aid has tremendous potential.

Major Compulsory Revision:

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) The major issue with this paper is that without a control group concluding that the decision aid is “efficacious” does not completely align with the study design. Please address this in the discussion. (The language used in the “conclusion” paragraph of the abstract seems more appropriate – “...appeared to promote...” and “...may be an effective tool...”)

2) Discussion. 1st sentence of 3rd paragraph. Please clarify “...we also found that one in five respondents actually completed a screening test, with more than half completing a colonoscopy.” This is not consistent with the last paragraph in the results section that states, “Of these 13, seven completed FOBT, five completed colonoscopy, and one reported both tests.”

3) Methods. Participant recruitment and eligibility. More detail with regards to the recruitment process is warranted especially given the lack of a control group. For example, did the fliers and newspaper advertisement include that this research project was related to cancer and specifically CRC thus potentially creating additional selection bias? Similarly, how were participants recruited via mailings and phone calls?

4) Methods. Decision aid content and format. 2nd paragraph. More detail regarding the “pre-printed, color brochures” would be helpful. What was the content of these brochures and were participants given specific instructions with the brochures. Although the authors note in the limitations paragraph that written materials alone have had little effect in English speaking populations, the brochures may confound the impact of the DA itself.
5) Methods. Phase 1 outcome measures, 1st and 2nd paragraph. The authors note that the survey knowledge items as well as the intent and self-efficacy measure were either developed by the authors or adapted from measures used in prior CRC screening studies. How were these measures and items developed and adapted? Were Spanish versions of these items tested and validated among with the target population or only translated from the English versions? The same potential limitation should be considered for “Phase 2 outcome measures.”

6) Results, 1st paragraph / Table 1. Include source of participant recruitment (i.e. community bulletin boards, clinic registry via FQHC or academic medical center.

7) Results, 1st paragraph / Table 1. If available, include if, or % of, participant and provider were language concordant

8) Results, 2nd paragraph and Figure 2. Include N for knowledge, self-efficacy, and intent scores.

9) Results, Table 2. Please clarify if * and p<0.001 for change is for each outcome or as a composite.

10) Discussion, 2nd paragraph, end of 3rd sentence. Please provide a reference for “In one survey, less than one third of Spanish speaking Latinos had discussed CRC screening with a physician within the past two years.”

11) Discussion, 3rd paragraph., second sentence. Please provide a reference for “...other evidence suggests it is unlikely that 195 of unscreened members of this target population would become current with CRC screening...”

Discretionary Revisions:

1) Although the authors note that a separate manuscript detailing the formative process of the decision aid development is under review, additional detail in this paper would be helpful for readers to better understand the adaptation of the previously developed English version of the DA.

2) Outstanding local efforts to promote CRC screening, including those done through the NC Community Health Center Association potentially impact the results of this study and may further limit generalizability. Please consider addressing in the discussion.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.