Reviewer's report

Title: A preliminary exploration of the feasibility of offering men information about potential prostate cancer treatment options before they know their biopsy results

Version: 1 Date: 19 December 2012

Reviewer: Kaaren Watts

Reviewer's report:

REVIEWER’S REPORT
This small study was designed to provide preliminary data about the feasibility of providing men with information about prostate cancer treatment options prior to their scheduled biopsy. The manuscript is very well written, and the methods appear, on the whole, appropriate and are clearly described. The literature review is up-to-date. The main limitation of this study, which is the very small sample size and hence, low power, is clearly stated.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Methods (Data Analyses) – the authors state that ‘Due to the small sample size no subgroup or multivariate comparisons were conducted’. This approach is appropriate. However, in the Results the authors report comparisons between the ED and UC groups conducted on the very small sample of men who received a positive biopsy result (n=9).

2. Results – Decisional Conflict Scale (DCS): It isn’t appropriate to state that ‘We did observe notable differences in the proportion of men reporting knowledge about risks of side effects in response to specific items of the DCS’ because the difference approaches, but is not significant, and the subgroup is very small (n=9 men with a positive biopsy). It would be more accurate to describe it as a trend.

3. Discussion, third paragraph – it doesn’t seem appropriate to describe the finding in Point 2 above as a ‘notable finding’ because the sample size is very small and the p-value is > .05.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Abstract (Methods) – insert ‘or suspicious DRE’ after ‘an elevated PSA test’.
2. Introduction, second paragraph, line 5: add ‘s’ to ‘provide’
3. Methods (Measures – Familiarity with treatment options & knowledge): how was the prostate cancer knowledge items scale scored ?. Please clarify how this relates to the way you’ve reported the result in Table 2.
4. Methods (Educational Intervention): the title of the DA in-text does not match the title in the Reference list [16].
5. Methods (Measures – Anxiety, distress & quality of life, line 8) – change ‘image’ to ‘imagine’
6. Results – Processes of care (line 2) – correct spelling to ‘options’
7. Discussion, first paragraph, line 9 – change ‘an’ to ‘a’
8. Discussion, second paragraph, line 8 – change ‘many’ to ‘some’
9. Figure 1, fourth box down under ‘ED’ and ‘UC’ – change ‘N’ to ‘n’

Discretionary Revisions
1. The term ‘participants’ is preferable to ‘subjects’, throughout.
2. Discussion, first paragraph – remove ‘adversely’.
3. Table 2 – ‘Familiarity with Treatment Options & Prostate Cancer Knowledge’:
   3a. Proportion familiar with Watchful Waiting/Active Surveillance, mean (s.d.) It would make the table clearer if the authors removed ‘mean (s.d.)’ and reported the n (%). Currently, it is not clear what the figures in the columns refer to.
   3b. Percent of knowledge items answered correctly, mean (s.d.). Please check the figures in the columns because it is not clear to me what is being reported here.

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.