Reviewer's report

Title: Factors influencing the surgery intentions and choices of women with early breast cancer: the predictive utility of an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour

Version: 1 Date: 18 March 2013

Reviewer: Kerry Sherman

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript has applied the theory of planned behaviour constructs to assess factors associated with surgical intentions of women with breast cancer. The use of a theoretical framework to address this question is commendable and provides necessary structure to the investigations. I did though find that the mention of the TRA over and above the TPB description was unnecessary and distracted from the main focus on the TPB. Although this research is addressing an interesting question, there are several flaws with this paper. The abstract refers to the TPB, but not to the specific components that were investigated. I would strongly suggest that some justification for the inclusion of anticipated regret, over and above the standard TPB variables is given at this point, particularly for readers who may be unfamiliar with the TPB constructs. The description of the study indicates that some type of intervention was made available to all participants in the study, but no mention is made of accounting for the effect of this intervention as a predictor of surgery uptake. Given that this study incorporates an intervention designed to impact on decisions of these patients, then at the very least the effects of this intervention need to included and partialled out in the analyses. Further to this, the authors have made no attempt to consider the possible role of other factors as being predictors of decision making. These analyses should have taken into account the possible effect of demographic and medical/clinical variables such as age, cancer stage, time since diagnosis etc. These variables have also been shown to impact on decisional processes and decisional outcomes and need to be incorporated into the analytic model. Further to this, I would have liked to see a more in-depth account in the Introduction of the wide literature that details factors associated with surgical decision making in cancer, particularly breast cancer. The limited sample size of this study is a real limitation. The authors state that 144 women were invited, but only 62 participated, which means that they have a recruitment rate of only 43%. Added to this, several women failed to complete the follow up assessment, leaving only 48 women at follow up, of whom 75% chose BCS. The small numbers in the final sample bring into question both the possibility that this study was underpowered, and that it is not a representative sample of women with breast cancer. I am also concerned with the item reliability of measures used with Cronbach's alpha of only 0.62/.63 being obtained. The authors should consider revising the items included in these measures to improve the reliability index.
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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