Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding public preferences for avoiding health losses caused by lapses in healthcare safety and patient lifestyle choices

Version: 1 Date: 13 November 2012

Reviewer: Colin Green

Reviewer's report:

General:

I like this paper, and feel that such papers – providing insights to the stated preferences of participants in studies – offer a helpful insight to the evidence now commonly cited/referred to in social decision-making dilemmas.

I find the paper in general well written and clear in its description of methods, results, and discussion, however I feel that the introduction/background could be set out more clearly. I also feel that the current abstract does not do justice to the manuscript set out.

Methods are appropriate and well described.

The data – text responses – seem quite extensive, with a high proportion of questions accompanied by text response data to allude to the reasons for participants stating their preferences.

The paper clearly builds on an earlier publication, with some outline/summary results from that study set out to provide/describe the rationale for this manuscript. There is a need for the reader to be familiar/aware of the earlier study/results, although the outline provided in the current manuscript does sufficiently introduce the prior empirical study, data, and results.

The discussion and conclusions stand up to scrutiny

Major concerns: - needed revisions (major revisions? Yes, but Authors could be trusted to make this change)

1. The abstract does not do a good job, in my view, of setting the context – the background – for this manuscript. I would like to see the first paragraph (background) re-written slightly to provide a more general introduction – possibly referring to the public preferences literature more generally, and the absence/sparsity of data to explore/examine the rationale/reason for the stated preferences presented. Thereafter drawing attention to the earlier study by the Authors, possibly in a more general way, as in my opinion in the current text (para 1 of abstract) the reference to the alternative forms of interventions (e.g. genetic disorders) without explanation, and use to terms such as ‘valued more highly’, do not offer a clear ‘way in’ to the topic (this is done more effectively in the body of the text).

2. Again, for the other sections of the abstract – methods, results and conclusion
– I feel the abstract could more clearly describe the research focus for this manuscript, and more directly present summary info on results, and conclusions. Whilst this is in the main an issue of ‘style’, I feel that the current abstract does not do justice to the manuscript set out.

Minor revisions:

3. The title whilst describing the study presented, could in my view be a little friendlier to the readership, possibly referring more generally to the nature of the paper e.g. ‘Exploring what lies behind public preferences over alternative health care interventions ....’ - rather than the more specific title used here.

4. The introduction/background could be set out more clearly. These sections could/should set the scene in a more introductory way, and could set out the research question/s (aims/objectives) more clearly.

5. Methods - Some explanation/cite to the ‘payment ladder’ would/may help a general readership (minor point - discretionary revision/suggest).

6. The results are presented in a fairly long-winded fashion, and whilst I acknowledge the need to be clear under the series of sub-headings, some consideration to the length of the paper would be / may be helpful in delivering the main messages more efficiently (discretionary revision).

**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’