Reviewer's report

Title: A Decision Exercise to Engage Cancer Patients and Families in Deliberation about Medicare Coverage for Advanced Cancer Care

Version: 2  Date: 26 March 2014

Reviewer: Sarah Meier

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

(1) The authors should address in greater depth the issue of how the framing of the study may have particularly important implications for the interpretation of the results. Participants were told to think of "a person with cancer in the last 6 months of life" which can be interpreted as a statement of the known effectiveness of cancer treatments with respect to increasing lifespan beyond this 6 month period. Assuming a six month limit on number of months remaining may have important implications for how participants decided to tradeoff level of cancer treatment for other benefits in the package.

Minor Essential Revisions

(2) While it is clear through review of the appendix that participants are to allocate the 50 markers with the understanding that they are designing a full health plan and not only a cancer specific health - or the cancer benefits within a health plan - this could be addressed with greater clarity in the manuscript.

(3) Please clarify in Table 4 that 0 is no coverage and 4 is highest level of coverage

Discretionary Revisions

(4) Inclusion of a column in table 1 that reports on the characteristics of the Medicare patient population with cancer would be a useful addition. This addition is relevant because it provides insight into the representativeness of the respondents in this study. This would be beneficial from the standpoint of understanding how generalizable the results of this study are to other Medicare cancer patients, and similarly, whether this study reflects successful ability to engage the general Medicare cancer patient population or only a selected subset of this population.

(5) Similarly, the authors might consider adding a column that reports on the characteristics of the adult or 65+ population.

(6) It would be helpful to know more about how the issue of supplemental coverage and personal economic context were addressed in the framing of the study.
(7) Please review the manuscript for minor typos.

**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