Reviewer's report

Title: Supporter or obstructor; experiences from contact person activities among Swedish women with breast cancer

Version: 1 Date: 3 November 2004

Reviewer: Carrie Jo Braden

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Need for greater clarity about the definition of association as the explanation "when a number of individuals work together in an organized form toward a common vision" does not clearly reflect a collective perspective said to be emphasized in Scandinavia. Note that the authors state the PABCP is based on the American Reach to Recovery Program which could be viewed as an individualized support resource rather than a collective type support resource.

2. Need for greater clarity in Karlsson et al.'s two different perspectives in studies of self-help groups. The difference between treatment and voluntary action perspectives isn't clear. More description of each perspective would be helpful. The sentence, "The voluntary action perspective focuses on aspects that relate to the individual or the group and the mutual principle is important." does not tell the reader how such a perspective differs from a treatment perspective.

3. The purpose of the paragraph beginning with "Questions related to the aims of organizing volunteer associations, ..." is unclear. Were these questions and concepts used to frame questions asked of informants?

4. How many prospective informants were contacted in total? What reasons were given by those who declined to participate?

5. It isn't clear from the findings that categories reflected saturation.

6. The manuscript needs to be reviewed by an expert qualitative methodologist (as opposed to an expert statistician).

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare I have no competing interests