Reviewer's report

Title: Mindfulness-based intervention for teenagers with cancer: Rationale and protocol development for a randomized, wait-list clinical trial.

Version: 5 Date: 26 February 2013

Reviewer: Andrew Vickers

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This is an interesting proposal, but many of the methodologic details are inadequately reported

1. It is insufficient to say merely that patients will be randomized. The exact logistic procedures used to ensure allocation concealment need to be carefully specified (see the CONSORT statement)

2. The section on sample size is deficient. First, it is rather vague, saying nothing about the justification for the sample size. Second, it states that "Effect sizes will first be calculated using the Wilcoxon test" even though the Wilcoxon test doesn't calculate an effect size.

3. The study is twice described as a pilot but there is no description of how the data will be used to design a subsequent larger trial or how feasibility will be assessed. Small size is described as a "limitation" even though it wouldn't be for a pilot.

4. The statistical analysis plan is on the vague side. The plan should explicitly state the hypothesis being tested (e.g. A difference in depression scores at 8 weeks) and the method used to assess that endpoint. A primary analysis should be specified, both in terms of the endpoint (e.g. Which scale of which questionnaire?) and the timepoint (8 weeks or six months?).

5. The statistical method that should be used is ANCOVA (see Vickers Altman BMJ 2001).