Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical drug trials in general practice: a ten-year overview of protocols

Version: 1 Date: 7 January 2013

Reviewer: Puvan Tharmanathan

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This article attempts to highlight two important, linked issues to do with the conduct of clinical trials in a primary care setting. It is uses a comprehensive database over a 10-year period to source cases for discussion. However, the text needs to be re-structured slightly, and the importance of this issue outside of Norway made more explicit.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The description of the case study (Case: A seeding trial?) should be done in the “Results” section, and then discussed in conjunction with the other findings under “Discussion”. In relation to this, the criteria for “seeding trials” in text box 1 should be mentioned earlier in the text, possibly in the “Background”, and then referenced for discussion points.

2. The “Methods” section should be more structured, and sub-headings identifying major steps would be useful.

3. The “Results” section should also then be structured to reflect the description in the “Methods”, including the use of sub-headings.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. There should be a statement in the “Background” section making explicit that this issue is of concern outside of Norway.

2. The last paragraph of the Background section states that the aim was to gain systematic knowledge of Norwegian trials in general practice. It would be useful for the investigators to state/re-state their purpose of gathering this information. Most of the description currently in this last paragraph can be moved to the “Methods” section.

Discretionary revisions

1. The language used in certain sections does not follow convention, and needs revision:
   - Result, Paragraph 1: The word “planned” before “included” is unnecessary
   - Discussion, Paragraph 2: “Over the last few years, there has been a decline in the number of clinical trials...
   - Discussion, Paragraph 2: Switch “most selling” with “most profitable” or something similar.
   - Discussion, Paragraph 3: Please rephrase “…more than averagely interested in
clinical research”.

- Discussion, Paragraph 3: Please rephrase “…by professionalising such participation and returning a not insignificant yearly income.”
- Discussion, Paragraph 4: Please correct “…most frequently researched…”
- Discussion, Paragraph 4: Please replace “overweight” in “overweight of clinical trials”

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.