Reviewer's report

**Title:** Design paper: randomized, phase III two-armed, parallel-group, clinical trial of Anma-massage therapy (Japanese massage therapy) versus no Anma-massage therapy for gynecological cancer survivors

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 13 May 2013

**Reviewer:** Myeong Soo Lee

**Reviewer's report:**

I read the protocol with interest. However, there are several points to be improved for publication.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. Please check the word counts for abstract. It looks like over 350.
2. page 6. 'Desire to receive Anma-massage therapy' means patients may have some expectation to receive Anma. This may discourage the control group and may give some effects on their response even though they will receive the Anma at the end of trial. I am not sure it is ethical or not. Do you have any solution to cover the possible discouragement for control group? They already know what Anma is. You cannot conceal the treatment.
3. page 7. The effects of Anma may different according to type of cancer. Please consider this point when you do randomization. You can use stratification of cancer types. I don't agree 'Allocation adjustment factor....". You don't know what the factor is but you should consider this before doing trial.
4. What is a 40-min relaxing chat? Do you have any protocol for this? I think it is possible to give negative effects on the symptoms of cancer survivors e.g fatigue. Someone may have a stress for talking and so on. Is this reasonable to employ this control group for comparing Anma-massage? I recommend some relaxation instead of relaxation chat.
5. It is unclear for primary endpoint. What is the severity of physical subjective complaints? The details may contain in secondary endpoints. Are there any difference between primary and secondary outcomes. Please make it clear what is the severity of physical subjective complaints.
6. Why do author measure 3 points in experimenatal group and 4 points in control group?
7. The statistical analysis is not clear. Please add how to compare the 3 points values of experimental group with the 4 points values in control group.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.