Reviewer’s report

Title: Lessons learned from the conduct of a multisite cluster-randomized practical trial of decision aids in rural and suburban primary cares practices

Version: 2 Date: 8 July 2013

Reviewer: CLAIRE LEATEM

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Thanks to the authors for their re submission, the manuscript is much clearer and sincere efforts have been made to address the issues raised by the reviewers. I would recommend that they always record at the beginning of the manuscript whether or not they are reporting on a pilot study.

The issue remains however that many patients did not receive information about the study prior to their clinician appointment for consideration - this was possible as according to the text (page 11) "...instead approaching them immediately as they appeared for their scheduled appointment at the clinic". The appointment was scheduled, and so the date was recorded, if the researchers had blanket access to patient notes as stated would they not have attempted to give patients info prior to the visit. A patient waiting in a surgery to see a Dr may feel under pressure to consent when they would prefer to decline - this leads to poor retention rates & may deter them from participation in further research. I believe that the authors cannot recommend to other researchers a method to improve the participation of clinicians and patients which basically relies on confronting potential participants unexpectedly.

In their reply the authors mention the role of the Steering Committee members, this definition would appear to be more in line with the role of a Project Management Group as opposed to a Steering Committee which would usually contain members 'neutral' or non-aligned to actual study.

I wish the authors every success in their further research endeavours.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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