Reviewer's report

Title: Outcome measures in rheumatoid arthritis randomised trials over the last 50 years

Version: 1 Date: 11 July 2013

Reviewer: Robert Landewe

Reviewer's report:

The authors have done very good job in investigating the implementation of the core set for RA clinical trials by comparing the core set usage before and after the publication of the core set. Thereafter they have sought additional input from trial authors to find out about their reasons to use or not use the core set in their RCT.

In fact I have no major compulsory revisions.

However, I would give the authors the suggestion to be a bit more positive regarding the usage of the core set after the publication of the core set. Admittedly, it cannot be proven that a better usage is due to the publication of the core set, and as such a better implementation is difficult to attribute to the (ACR/Omeract) initiative and the publication itself, but fact is that implementation has improved. You can see that best in the results regarding biologic treatments, whilst these cannot be compared with similar trials before the publication of the core set, since these treatments were not available by then.

This reviewer, though, has no doubt that the core set has become the standard for outcome assessment selection in modern clinical trials. Obviously, there is still room for improvement, and this should be emphasized over and over.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests