Reviewer's report

Title: The Challenge of Recruiting Patients Into a Placebo Controlled Surgical Trial

Version: 3
Date: 4 April 2014

Reviewer: Ji Cheng

Reviewer's report:

The authors have responded thoughtfully and appropriately to my comments. The clarifications and additions made their message delivered through this manuscript more focused.

I only have two more follow-up comments

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The statistical test was misused in the Method-Statistics section, page 7, second paragraph, “chi-squared goodness of fit test was used to determine if any answer were preferable (i.e. proportion above 50%)”. Goodness of fit test is for assessing whether a statistical model is fitting or not after the analysis. I suggest the authors to remove the test for difference and simply report the proportions with 95% confidence interval. If the authors really want to test for which answer is preferable or not, proportion test against the null-hypothesis of 50% can be used. However, I feel it is not necessary and over-used because the focus of this manuscript is not for generating statistical inference.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The sentence in the abstract-method is left unchanged, “Participating patients were asked about their rationale for joining the study and which kind of information had been most beneficial in deciding whether to participate or not”. As I previously pointed out that, the survey/questionnaire data collected in this study were only related to the reason of participating. The author didn’t ask the reasons from the patients who refused to participate.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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