Reviewer's report

Title: Factors affecting compliance and non-compliance by physicians in a large-scale randomized clinical trial

Version: 1 Date: 25 May 2006
Reviewer: James Wright

Reviewer's report:

General

This was an interesting attempt to identify the physician factors that were associated with levels of patient follow-up reported from an investigator initiated trial in Japan. The methods of the paper were well reported and acceptable. Some of the writing requires careful editing prior to publication.

Major Revision

Even the title of the paper suggests a causality relationship between the variables or factors identified and the completion of patient follow-up. I think at best the factors identified provide a focus for possible interventions that may or may not be subsequently tested in a prospective manner. The authors conclude that their findings will be useful for reducing the additional burden associated with incomplete follow-up data, but it is not clear how this will be accomplished with the data at hand. Would they suggest that only investigators over 50 years of age enter patients? I think such strong conclusions need to be better explained or ideally justified with the data at hand.

Discretionary Revision

The theme of cost is throughout the paper and is in fact the first issue of the Discussion. While clearly an aspect of the paper, it is a minor issue of this paper which should be focused on the factors not the cost of follow-up data. I think cost to be relegated further back in the discussion and be de-emphasized.

Did the physician investigators consent to the use of their personal data for the purpose of the current report? When they completed the questionnaire about the level of support, did they know that would be correlated with their performance in terms of completeness with patient follow-up data?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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