Reviewer's report

Title: Do Trialists Endorse Clinical Trial Registration? Survey of a PUBMED Sample.

Version: 5  Date: 7 September 2007

Reviewer: Erick Turner

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The limitation "...participants who had some knowledge about trial registration may have been more able to respond" is somewhat vague. Can you be more specific? Related to this, you should acknowledge as a limitation that you did not examine the question of possible differences in responses between respondents with prior knowledge and naive respondents.

Regarding the question of language bias, the concern is not that respondents were unable to deal with a survey written in English. Rather, the concern was whether the sample of respondents was subject to selection bias because they were published in articles indexed in PubMed. In place of the sentence beginning with "Considering", would suggest something like, "In spite of this, we did not find evidence for language bias: 74% of the respondents were from non-English speaking countries."

Table 2 is an improvement over the two boxes in the original submission. To be consistent throughout the table, you should show the Ns in the columns for women and men in addition to the percentages, which should be in parentheses. The table will need additional formatting, which I assume will be handled at the copy editor stage.

Speaking of formatting, Figure 1 needs work. The "slices" of the pie chart are done in various shades of gray, which are very difficult to tell apart from one another. (Perhaps it would be OK if done in color, but even so, many people will print out your article on a black-and-white printer.) Also, you should put the Ns and the corresponding percentages in the same place, either adjacent to the slices or in the legend, but not one in one place and the other in the other place. Perhaps the journal has a copy editor who handles graphical issues. If not, I vote
for doing away with the legend entirely and going with direct labeling of the
figure, as recommended by graph guru Edward Tufte (who, by the way, hates pie
charts). That way, the reader's eye doesn't have to bounce back and forth
between the legend and the graph. Excel, which I presume you used to create
this pie chart, doesn't allow that kind of "tweaking". To accomplish that, you
would probably need to bring it into a drawing program.

But these are just my suggestions, and I defer to the editors and copy editors as
to how this data can be made more readable. Perhaps a table could be
considered--this would certainly be the easiest technically.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Regarding the question of PubMed having a language bias, you mention that you
provided a reference, but I do not see it.

I would encourage you to mention the concern about the use of the word "key".

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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