Reviewer's report

Title: Seminars may increase recruitment to randomised controlled trial: lessons learned from WISDOM

Version: 1 Date: 4 September 2007

Reviewer: Susan Ellenberg

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The possibility, acknowledged by the authors, that the association between participating in a seminar and agreeing to enter the trial is simply the result of selection bias, should be acknowledged in the Abstract. Wording implying a causal relation, such as “Group seminars reduced the number of telephone calls…” should be revised to avoid implying that the authors have demonstrated that the seminars were a causal factor in trial enrollment.

2. The comparison of the amount of time required for seminars versus not should be more clear. Why were fewer telephone calls required for women who attended the seminar? Earlier, in the description of methods, it seemed as though all women would be called, whether or not they attended a seminar. Also, “contact time” as shown in Figure 2 does not account for time to prepare for the seminars—surely those conducting the seminars spent time preparing their remarks, material to be distributed, etc. Travel time to and from the seminar location for those conducting the seminar should also be accounted for.

3. The discussion of related studies and the speculation that seminars may be more beneficial to certain groups seems too much of a stretch, given that the beneficial effects in this study may not be effects at all but simply selection bias. I would recommend that the authors simply say that if seminars are useful at all, their effects may vary in different populations.

4. The limitations of the study, including the very real possibility that the effects shown result entirely from selection bias, should be noted in the Conclusions.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The dates during which WISDOM enrolled participants should be provided.

Discretionary Revisions

None

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: Acceptable

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