Reviewer's report

Title: UK Waiting Time Targets in Lung Cancer Treatment: Are They Achievable? Results Of A Prospective Tracking Study

Version: 1 Date: 31 July 2006

Reviewer: John Au

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a well written paper concerning a very topical subject matter which should be of interest to clinicians, health administrators, and politicians.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
I have some trouble with the numbers presented in the paper. For example, histological diagnoses were obtained in 82.6% of patients (n=247), but the breakdown into cell types only add up to 75.6%. The denominator used here is unclear and seemed to change between cell types. The percentages of the different treatment modalities add up to 103%. The percentages of NSCLC undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and no treatment were based on a treatment population of 170, but earlier in the paper the author stated that 188 were considered to be NSCLC, including 18 without histological diagnosis. This needs clarification.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
How confident are the authors in capturing 100% of lung cancers undergoing treatment in the period examined?
Do inpatient referrals fare any better or worse when compared to GP referrals?
The most interesting and relevant part of the paper is presented in the discussion, which examined the various reasons for delays in reaching treatment. However, no data was presented in the paper to support these statements. Are there lessons to be learnt from this data? Does the data point to specific areas where attention should be focussed on to improve access to treatment?

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.