Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of patient involvement in a systematic review and meta-analysis of individual patient data in cervical cancer treatment

Version: 1 Date: 24 January 2012

Reviewer: Jonathan Boote

Reviewer's report:

I thought this to be an interesting and worthwhile paper, describing the involvement of patients in a systematic review and meta-analysis, together with a report of an evaluation from the perspectives of researchers and the patients themselves. There are few published accounts of patient involvement in the systematic review process, so this paper is to be welcomed.

I recommend that the journal accepts the paper for publication, subject to the authors addressing the following relatively minor issues:

1. in the background section of the abstract on line 2, I think the words 'to be involved' should be deleted

2. In the results section of the abstract, second to last line, the words 'which was generally positive about the experience' is unclear and should be rephrased to state if those who took part in the evaluation were positive about the process and/or the outcome of the involvement exercise

3. second to last line of the first paragraph in the methods section, an 'a' is needed between 'of' and 'job'

4. page 6 of the manuscript, last paragraph, line 2, the word 'provided' is needed between 'they' and 'input'

5. page 7, 2nd paragraph, lines 5 and 6, I think 'help' to' should be replaced with 'held to', and a comma and an 'and' be added after 'points'

6. page 7, 1st paragraph in the results section, line 2, the second 'from' should be changed to 'at'

7. page 8, first line under survivorship issues, I don't think the apostrophe after researchers is needed

8. page 10, line 4 under the 'being of value' heading, 'affects' should read 'effects'

9. page 15, paragraph 2, line 3, 'the' is needed between 'that' and disease'

10. page 15, 3rd line from the bottom, 'researcher's' should read 'researchers'

11. page 16, line 4, 'studies' should read 'study'
12. page 16, is the INVOLVE guidance on public involvement in systematic reviews out yet? I couldn't find it on the INVOLVE website

13. page 16, last paragraph, the Boote et al review looked at patient involvement in health and social care research, so the words 'and social' need inserting between 'health' and 'care'.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests