Reviewer's report

Title: Framing overdiagnosis in breast screening: a qualitative study with Australian experts

Version: 2 Date: 20 April 2015

Reviewer: Ray Moynihan

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General Issues
In general I think the paper adds valuable data about the way different people frame the problem of overdiagnosis and its potential solutions. The research question appears well defined, the methods are appropriate and generally well described, though more detail on how the experts were chosen, and how the interviews were conducted, could be valuable. The data analysis appears sound, the manuscript is on the whole very well written and clear, and there are good references to relevant data. More information on the study limitations are needed, and I have (below) suggested a re-emphasis in the conclusions.

Minor Essential Revisions

Background
The first paragraph of this section feels too long. It needs to be broken into more than one paragraph, and it needs to be written more clearly – to ensure comprehension by those unfamiliar with the intricacies of this debate. The bulk of the paper is very clearly written – and this Introduction needs to be much clearer.

Page 3- Line 74. It feels like the line “Although it was known that one in five screen detected cancers...” needs a reference. Also, this wording implies certainty about the magnitude of overdiagnosis, whereas there is debate about the magnitude, as you outline in this article. I suggest changing wording to reflect the uncertainty, and adding a reference.

Methods
1st Paragraph – I feel we need a few more words on how the list of 46 experts was drawn up – and whether there were any steps taken to ensure a range of opinions (eg pro/sceptical) were gathered. I also note that the supplemental material has only one question on overdiagnosis (forgive me if I have missed something) – which asks - “what are your thoughts on this issue”. If there was any further structure to the questioning on this topic, or some details about the interviewing style/approach, that might be valuable.

Discussion
Apart from an indirect reference to this being an Australian study, there is no discussion of Limitations – please include some text on the limitations as you see them.
Conclusion

Page 18 – Lines 433-436. I would be less inclined to offer this set of recommendations for how people conduct themselves in public debates, and more inclined to summarise the results of your important study. If you feel the recommendations (or some of them) are justified, I feel you need to make the case more clearly in the Discussion for why your results demand these sorts of recommendations. For example, I feel that suggesting that people “who engage in future debates”, nominate whether “their frame is commensurable or incommensurable with others” is not very helpful, in that opportunities to engage in debate are often very limited (in time or space). My sense is that you have uncovered some very useful material on how different people frame this problem (and potential solutions), and that the recommendations for how folks conduct themselves in debates are in some ways a little disconnected from these findings.

Minor Issues not for publication

Page 16, Line 396 – I would suggest removing the word “greatly”

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests