Reviewer’s report

Title: Oncology practitioners’ perspectives and practice patterns of post-treatment cancer survivorship care in the Asia-Pacific region, results from the STEP study

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Reviewer: Erin E. Hahn

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Ms. Ref. No.: BCAN-D-17-00543

Title: Oncology practitioners' perspectives and practice patterns of post-treatment cancer survivorship care in the Asia-Pacific region

BMC Cancer

1. Study summary: Thank you for inviting me to review this manuscript, which reports survey results from oncology practitioners in 10 Asia-Pacific countries regarding their perceptions of responsibility for, confidence in, and frequency of survivorship care delivery. Post-treatment survivorship care is a critical part of the cancer care continuum, and it is important to evaluate perceptions of care delivery in countries underrepresented in the extant literature. I have both major and minor concerns regarding the manuscript, as outlined below.

2. I am concerned about the design of the survey. Essentially, the authors developed a checklist of survivorship care activities, and asked participants to rate three domains for each listed survivorship care activity using a Likert scale: 1) their responsibility for delivery; 2) confidence in delivery; and 3) frequency of delivery. There is a separate section assessing barriers to survivorship care. The authors report very high sub-scale reliability with Cronbach's alpha from 0.92-0.97 and statistically significant correlations between the subscales. I applaud the authors for including these metrics, however, I'm concerned that the definitions of responsibility, confidence, and frequency as shown in the additional file are not sufficient, potentially leading to participant giving the same ratings for all three. This is compounded by using the same set of questions for each domain. Was a factor analysis done? That would go a long way in demonstrating that the survey domains are distinct from one another, and not merely repeating the same dimension three times. It's difficult to feel confident in the survey responses; in particular, the very similar results from the high- and low-income countries are cause for concern. Thus the conclusions reached by the authors are in question.
3. I'm also concerned that the authors are unable to report response rates, and the associated problems with generalizability across the countries. The 10 countries in the study are very diverse (e.g., varying levels of socio-economic status) and while the authors report the total number of participants from each country they are unable to assess response rate. Without data on the denominator (those approached to participate) it is not possible to understand the representativeness of the sample, or evaluate potential biases related to selection. Convenience sampling of this type—while useful in pilots or qualitative exploration—does raise questions when the results are purported to represent multiple countries. The authors note that the vast majority of participants are female nurses age 40 or less; was this due to the distribution of the underlying population, or is this population more likely to respond to the survey request?

4. Minor concerns: In the Introduction, it would be helpful to know why the survivorship phase has been neglected in some of these countries. In Results, please add more details on the type of clinical setting (e.g., free standing hospital, university medical center); these factors have the potential to impact survivorship care delivery. Table 5 has interesting data but is difficult to read and interpret; consider a different layout. The 'lack of time' factor is first in the HIC and LMIC columns; this is a similar barrier to those reported in European and North American countries. Perhaps an exploration of how others are dealing with this issue to include in the policy recommendations would be useful.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?

If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?

If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?

If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?

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I am able to assess the statistics
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Acceptable

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