Reviewer’s report

Title: Short and Long-term Barriers and Facilitators of Skin Self-Examination Among Individuals Diagnosed with Melanoma

Version: 0 Date: 30 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Caroline Watts

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes the short-term and long-term predictors of skin self-examination. I like the way you defined two groups based on the thoroughness of examination and your analysis appears well done. I think this is a paper of interest to health care professionals with an interest in melanoma research. There are quite a few points which require clarification in the Background section of the manuscript which I have outlined below. I have some additional questions regarding the manuscript.

1. Did the authors consider asking about partner status and do they think this may have an effect on SSE?
2. Did the authors check the dates for follow-up appointments and could this have influence adherence to SSE? And did patients with thicker melanomas have more frequent clinician follow-up?
3. Could the authors provide some thoughts related to their experience why the comprehensiveness of SSE was maintained but yet there was decreasing frequency of SSE over time. Could the authors expand on the measures motivational interviewing and implementation intentions to address decreasing frequency of SSE over time.

Comments regarding the Background.
Page 5, paragraph 3, "in the last 3 months and were …". The and needs to be removed.
Page 5, paragraph 4, Could the authors review if you need the "post" descriptor as all intervals are following the intervention and implicit.
Page 6, line 5 Could the authors clarify who is projecting the statistics or clarify if the estimate is for invasive or in situ melanoma, and also for the melanomas referred to on line 11.
Page 6, line 14. I was surprised to read that melanoma tumours grow faster than other tumors. Could the authors please reference or clarify this statement.
Page 6, line 25. Survival rates for in situ and Stage II melanomas are very different and AJCC Melanoma Staging estimates would be useful to refer to. Also could the authors review the definition of distant disease as Stage III is usually defined as characterised by regional rather than distant spread, which defines Stage IV.
Page 6, line 29 and line 35. There are two sentences describing the increased risk of subsequent primary for melanoma survivors; a 9 fold increase or 60% increased risk. Could the adjust the text to clarify for the reader.
Page 6, line 41. Could the authors review the sentence where reducing mortality is based on early
diagnosis of premetastatic tumors.- if premetastatic then by definition is early

Page 6, line 49. Could the authors review the sentence "Because melanoma develops within a preclinical phase, it is amenable to early detection" is confusing as some melanomas are difficult to detect and an earlier sentence said that melanomas grow faster than other tumors and metastasize when they are only 1mm in depth.

Page 7, line 48. Could the authors review the sentence "...it is well known that SSE's are related to better prognosis" doesn't make sense as a sentence. Also aren't clinician detected melanomas thinner than patient detected melanomas and Breslow depth of lesion is related to prognosis.

Page 7, line 48. Could the authors consider the addition of "generally" to the sentence "...readily visible on the skin surface" as some melanomas may not be easy to detect due to body site.

Page 7, line 57. Could the authors clarify what they mean in the sentence "...vary by the modality of asking about the exam and the time frame of assessment"

Page 8, line 3-Page 8 Line 14. Could the authors please provide some interpretation around these results.

Page 8, line 44. Can the authors elaborate on the effect of level of anxiety on SSE?

Page 7, line 48. Could the authors consider the addition of "morbidity and" to the sentence "...lower melanoma related mortality."

Additional comments on the manuscript.
Page 14, line 31. Can you check the variables in the table match the manuscript?

Page 14, line 50 and 52. Can the authors check if the same variable "advanced stage" is mentioned twice.

Page 17, line 50. Demo should be demonstration

Could the authors check Table 1. I believe this table requires review as it contains demographic data with quartiles and results in different columns. Usually it is good to know if the females and male characteristics are similar or different. Stage at diagnosis is presented in one column. It is unclear why the quartiles are presented for the demographic data and what they mean for the other variables. If this could be clarified in the table this would be informative to the reader. I cannot see a title on my version but may be related to the printout.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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