Reviewer’s report

Title: "Developing a patient decision aid for the treatment of women with early stage breast cancer: the struggle between simplicity and complexity"

Version: 1 Date: 19 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Elina Farmanova

Reviewer’s report:

It is a very pertinent study and you have accomplished a very good work. The time is ripe for such reports and we need more and more of these to be able to support the work done in SDM internationally. Your report is very interesting and should be published, but some serious revisions are required to improve the quality of this report.

First of all, I find that your text is morphing from introduction to methods, from results to discussion; your introduction has to set the stage for the work you are doing, your methods have to describe how you go about doing the research you introduced in your introduction, your results should report results only and discussion has to discuss the significance of your results, implication for practice, etc. Right now it is really difficult to follow your train of thought across the article.

In the introduction you mention option talk, preference talk and decision talk; however you never describe the decision talk and never get back to this topic again. It is not clear why you were introducing these notions in first place.

Explain your recruitment strategy in more detail; it needs to be detailed enough for someone to be able to repeat exactly what you did. So, when you say you employed a diversity of methods, you really need to give details of these methods. Also, why did you recruit women who already had surgery? it is not clear from your text why this choice has been made. Please explain.

Your results section could be enhanced by introducing a section where you would describe the level of agreement between what patients and professionals were proposing (what did they agree on? what did they disagree on?). Your results could be enhanced significantly if you found a way to organize your results thematically; i.e. what has come out of interviews and focus groups that you had in terms of major themes?

In the title of the article you allude to a conflict between simplicity and complexity, but you never explore or explain this conflict. It is a very important subject and must be addressed to properly reflect on the work you have done.

You mention that consensus was very hard to reach with regards to patients values and in the end you had to abandon searching for consensus among professionals. Please be specific about what consensus you refer to, why was it impossible to reach and what has been done to try (if anything
has been done). You also refer to some technical difficulties, was that related to the consensus and interfered in any way? Please explain.

How did you decide to try a web-based version of a DA? Was it a recommendation from your participants?

Did you comply with the requests and recommendations from your participants at 100%? You say their recommendations has "significant influence on the content", it sounds like you considered some of their recommendations but may be not all of them? Explain how you made choices about the content. For example, did the team of researchers review comments collectively and decide what to do?

Goodluck with your work!

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.

Unable to assess

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

No

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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