Reviewer's report

Title: A cost-utility analysis of a rehabilitation service for people living with and beyond cancer

Version: 1 Date: 9 July 2014

Reviewer: Carla Sabariego

Reviewer's report:

Authors have conducted a cost-utility analysis of an outpatient rehabilitation service for people living with cancer, delivered in a hospice day care unit. The study is highly relevant because of the scarceness of comparable economic evaluations in the field and of high importance to inform resources allocation. The economic evaluation has several limitations, ranging from a very small sample size in the original RCT to the high uncertainty of the estimates. These limitations are, however, related to the study field, carefully accounted for in the analyses and very well discussed in the discussion section. Methods are sound and well-described, data is sound, results are well-presented and discussed, and limitations are clearly stated and very-well discussed. My only criticism is the structure of the background section, which is very well-written but comes closer to a formal report than to a scientific article. In summary, I consider the paper excellent, highly relevant to the field and recommend it to be published after a major revision of the background section. I congratulate authors for this excellent paper and for having done the best possible to generate evidence about hospice care.

Major compulsory revision

1. I would encourage authors to revise the background section, shifting parts that usually belong to the methods section, namely paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, to the methods and including in the background at least one more paragraph about the added value of the carrying out an economic evaluation in the field. In my opinion, the paper would improve a lot if the introduction is carefully reframed.

2. Additionally, the intention of the economic evaluation is clear but still I miss a clearly defined research question both in the abstract and in the introduction. What is the objective of the paper? Please include clear objectives in the background sections (abstract and main text).

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests