Reviewer’s report

Title: Head and neck cancer survivors’ preferences for and evaluations of a post-treatment dietary intervention

Version: 0 Date: 25 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Andy Ness

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes the preferences and views of a pilot study of 24 people with head and neck cancer randomised six months after the end of treatment to a 12 week trial of weekly dietary advice or weekly advice with goal setting.

Major issues

I realize that this is a pilot study but it is small, the sample is heterogenous (in terms of tumour site and stage) and not representative (of 350 people screened only 24 were recruited - I am not convinced by the argument that it has similar demographics to SEER p12 line 297). In addition, the intervention took place six months post treatment which interestingly few participants thought was the optimum time. And the evaluation used simple questions rather than a more sophisticated approach like willingness to pay that may better elicit preferences. I think the authors need to acknowledge these limitations more clearly and tone down their conclusions as I think this study alone provides limited evidence to inform the design of future dietary interventions for people with head and neck cancer.

Minor issues

1. Page 3 line 84 - "calories" should be replaced with "energy"

2. Page 8 lines 206-208 - removing the repeated sentence

3. Page 11 line 272 - Medicare coverage is a parochial issue rather than a universal concern - the discussion should acknowledge this by saying something like "In some countries such as the US...."

4. Page 12 line 290 - I don't think this study shows that there is "high demand for dietary interventions among HNC survivors" - I think this overstates what the observed
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