Reviewer’s report

Title: Patients' views of cancer research and their opinions of clinical trial information: results of a prospective patient survey

Version: 3  Date: 23 August 2015

Reviewer: Tove Godskesen

Reviewer's report:

Comments to the Authors
The study is thoroughly done; the manuscript is well written, and the results can be easily followed. A very important subject!

Major Compulsory Revisions

Article

1. Methods: Should include a paragraph “Study subjects”, where you describe the patients included in this study, and who invited them to the questionnaire-study. Also, describe where they filled out the questionnaire and were they allowed filling it out at home?

2. Page 5, Methods: “Clinical trials of an investigational medicinal product (CTIMP) and non-CTIMP trials were included, as well as pre-screening studies”. It would be interesting to know what the CTIMP-studies included (chemo, tablets, radiation, surgery, etc.)

3. Page 6, Questionnaires, last line: “The questionnaire was designed to be anonymous to the researchers analysing the survey results”. In the questionnaire, the patients are informed that their responses will be kept strictly confidential. How did you manage to keep the answers confidential when you linked answers with medical record information and the last question about being contacted in the future (questionnaire A, p 5)? Can you describe the way you did it?

4. Page 8, Reasons for participation, line 8: “if they were being treated with palliative rather than curative intent”. This analysis is not mentioned in the Method part (but a very important finding).

5. Page 12, Discussion, line 3: You say that your results are consistent with the UK National Cancer Experience Survey. How come that you did not use this survey but developed your own survey? You need to discuss why you choose to make a study-specific questionnaire, in addition to the strengths and weaknesses of your method used, in the Discussion part, and the generalizability of your results.

6. Questionnaires, related to informed consent: Patients are not informed (what I
can see) that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time, or that this study is scientific research. The questionnaire A (page 5, last question): “If you would be interested in participating in any future surveys about clinical trials please tick the box, write your name and date of birth below and sign your agreement. You are under no obligation to complete this section” Is thus the rest of the questionnaire to be viewed as obligatory? This needs to be clarified.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract

1. Methods, what do you mean by “were prospectively invited …”

2. Results, the important finding that patients treated with palliative intent and those who have received more treatment lines are more willing to participate….

3. Conclusion, “The majority of patients approached consented to one or more clinical trials”. If you mean that the majority consented to the trial, you should remove the word “approached”.

4. Page 7, Statistical analyses: Did you use a program for the analyses (such as SPSS?)

In your …

5. Table 1, Characteristics of trials: Trial Setting: Neoadjuvant, Adjuvant, Advanced, Any and Lymphoma. Why is not Lymphoma included in the other characteristics? For me, this is two different classifications, where the first four go across diagnosis, but Lymphoma is a diagnosis. Is there a reason for this? If so, explain it.

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 below.