Reviewer’s report

Title: Identifying Effective Retention Strategies: A Research Agenda

Version: 0 Date: 25 May 2017

Reviewer: Cushla Cooper

Reviewer’s report:

I thought this was an interesting and relevant paper to my field in trial development and trial management. I thought the scope could have further considered what site training actually involves? Site training on recruitment techniques (and this was alluded to) could be different from site training on the importance of CRF completion.

I was glad to see the consideration of different patient populations was alluded to and suggested further research needed in that area. But the focus of this paper was appropriately generic.

I wasn't clear on whether the strategies discussed had been implemented during the course of the trial when problems arose or if they were implemented from the outset - if both - this wasn't clear either.

There are some typos noted throughout the manuscript and some percentages presented with n= in brackets and some the other way around - do these need to be consistent?

Line 45 - is the last sentence necessary in the abstract?

55 - "joint second" - with what?

114 - missing word "results of the survey SHARED with CTUs....

167 Paragraph - what is the different between robust monitoring and working closely with research sites and maintaining good relationships with trial sites (line 170) - aren't these the same thing?

Table 2 - first row - what does "database" refer to....? It's not alluded to anywhere else - does it mean monitoring of a database...?

249 - Is 39% "many" ?

255 - one and was need to be switched

302 - evaluated by CTUs should be considered (removal of word "was")

303 - missing word - ...could not BE identified...
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

Quality of figures
All images and figures within the manuscript should be genuine i.e. without evidence of manipulation. No specific feature within an image may be enhanced, obscured, moved, removed, or introduced. If you have concerns about the veracity of the figures you should choose the first option below.

Statistical review
Is it essential that this manuscript is seen by an expert statistician? If so, please give your reasons in your report.

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.
I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal