Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of providing risk information on undergoing cervical cancer screening: a randomized controlled trial

Version: 3  Date: 10 October 2014

Reviewer: Jo Waller

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Major comment

This study compares no invitation with an invitation including benefit information and an invitation including benefit and harm information. It is already well established that postal invitations increase uptake of cervical screening, so the comparing of the control group with the intervention groups adds little to the existing literature.

The comparison of the two information formats is interesting, but both are extremely brief, and information about possible harm arising from (sometimes unnecessary) treatment was not included, I think could limit the validity of the study. In addition, with moves towards informed choice throughout healthcare, I'm not sure that anyone would advocate screening invitations that don't mention the possible harms, so again, the practical implications of the study are not clear.

Minor revisions

Abstract

Please make clear in the abstract that the participants are non-adherent to screening

Introduction

It would be useful to know what the incidence of cervical cancer is in Japan

Methods

Please clarify the usual screening programme. Do women ever receive a postal invitation, or is the information about screening simply available online and via a newsletter? Does the newsletter get delivered to people’s homes?

How was non-adherence to screening defined? The authors state that screening is annual to triennial. Were women included if they had not been screened within the last 3 years?

It seems that one of the major harms of screening (unnecessary treatment and possible adverse consequences of this) is missing from the information. Did the authors consider including this information?

The authors refer to ‘demographic characteristics’ of the sample but only age is
shown in Table 2. Did they have any other information, such as social class or ethnic background?

Results
I found Figure 2 quite hard to look at – perhaps a more conventional table showing the level of uptake odds ratios for attendance in each group would be a clearer format?

There were minor language errors throughout the manuscript which could be corrected by a native speaker.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests