Reviewer's report

**Title:** Pediatrician's Perspectives on Discharging Against Medical Advice (DAMA) among Pediatric Patients: A Qualitative Study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 24 September 2011

**Reviewer:** Chris Feudtner

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In this article, the author attempts to close a perceived gap in scholarship regarding physician attitudes towards discharges against medical advice (DAMA). She does this by reporting the results of a single recorded and transcribed focus group discussion, and identifies three major themes that arose in the discussion along with four examples of factors that the focus group participants felt contributed to the decision to enter a DAMA order. While I concur that this area of the medical literature deserves study, this paper has a number of serious weaknesses that must be addressed.

1. The sample: While there is debate on exactly how many subjects is sufficient for a good qualitative study, most would agree that a sample of eleven health care providers in a single focus group is too few.

2. The method: There is no reason to think that this small group of people has considered every factor that others in similar situations elsewhere would think important, and though the author asserts the openness of the discussion, there are good reasons to think that speaking in front of their peers would go some way towards stifling candor among the participants. The author’s admission that none of the residents considered dissatisfaction with their care to be a factor in DAMA requests, when it almost certainly must be a factor at least some fraction of the time, speaks to this issue.

3. The lack of a significant new finding or compelling conclusion: The author fails to make a point at the conclusion of this paper. She identifies a gap in current research in the introduction, but as far as a reader can tell does nothing to fill it. The conclusion restates the gist of the introduction, and there is no discussion section or critical analysis or interpretation of any of the findings from this focus group discussion.

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**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.