Reviewer’s report

Title: Experiencing dementia in a rural setting in northern Tanzania

Date: 21 October 2013

Reviewer: Dismand S Houinato

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REVIEW OF MANUSCRIPT “Experiencing dementia in a rural setting in northern Tanzania”

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes the aim of the study was to explore the socio-cultural beliefs surrounding dementia and the life experience of people with dementia (PWD) and their caregivers in the Hai District of Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The study proposes a qualitative methodological approach. In-depth interviews are appropriate for an approach on such delicate subject. But the methodology does not describe the qualitative research techniques that have identified the 41 persons.

In this section, we don’t have any description of Haï district. Could you please give more information such as level of education, proportion of people older than 70 years, data of prevalence of dementia (its importance in Tanzania). We don’t also know:
- how the author determinate the age of people? as far it is very difficult to access the age of people in Africa because of the lack of the birth certificate.
- What is the real sample size: 41, 25 or else?
- More information about careers and caregivers. How long did they live with PWD?

3. Are the data sound?
In the first part of this chapter, could you please tell, what is your denominator? 41, 25 or else?
In the paragraph “knowledge on dementia”, if the denominator is 25, the authors are not allowed to present percentage but only numbers.

In general, the fact that most of the data were collected from caregivers may introduce a bias in the quality of comments related to the community. Could you please focus more on patients and their careers (parents, etc.)? Also, The effectiveness of traditional treatments cannot be adequately appreciated by respondents who live in the hospital. "Almost everyone who consulted traditional healers said they had not seen an improvement in their health." In general, for
seeking care, it is the failure of traditional medicine that lead patients to turn to the health center, or patients who practice religions that do not allow to visit traditional healers. In this comparison, the biomedical model has been favored.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes, the article is well structured.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   In this section, authors didn’t discuss seriously the limitations of this study, the sample size and biases related to qualitative study.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   No, limitations of the work are not clearly stated

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   The title is not very explicit. We suggest the following: social representation and practices related to dementia in Hai District (Tanzania).
   Concerning the abstract section, we suggest the authors to:
   - Rewrite the methods: it is very poor and didn’t help to know how the authors investigated each person in the survey. Specifically it is necessary to get information about how data were collected and the definition of dementia used by authors.
   - Reduce discussion section

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   The manuscript is well written.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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