Reviewer's report

Title: Palliative care making a difference in rural Uganda, Kenya and Malawi: three rapid evaluation field studies

Version: 1 Date: 8 November 2010

Reviewer: Lukas Radbruch

Reviewer's report:

The authors report on palliative care services in three African countries. They used a rapid assessment method, combining available epidemiological data, interviews with staff, patient stories and direct observation from field work.

The paper is well written and most interesting to read. It is a pity that the interviews were not recorded. Content analysis of the transcripts of the interviews would have allowed an in-depth analysis and would have ensured higher validity of the results.

The results are represented separately for each country. It would be important to highlight common topics across the three countries.

The authors state that they tried to select not only satisfied patients for the interviews. However, the paper is rather focused on the story of success. The authors should provide more information on deficits and failures. Did the staff members report on initiatives that did not work out?

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

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