Reviewer's report

**Title:** After you: Conversations between patients and healthcare professionals in planning for end of life care.

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 12 June 2012

**Reviewer:** H. Roeline W. Pasman

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a nice interview study on a relevant topic for BMC Palliative Care with clear research questions, mainly exploring discussions about ACP in a rather pragmatic way as the researchers state themselves.

I have some suggestions to improve the paper, and some parts are not clear to me:

1) (compulsory revision)

In the first paragraph of the Findings, it is mentioned that the HCP is asked about the patient’s level of understanding of his/her condition and that this varied. It is not clear to me how many patients had a degree of “open awareness” (9? or more than 9 of which 9 had reported that they had engaged in some level of conversation)? I think some more information about the degree of awareness is useful:

- for instance an overview of level of awareness of all 18 included cases
- were the questions to people who were not aware of their situation different from the other interviews? And if yes how? Did this effect the results?
- the fact that HCP are asked about the awareness could already be mentioned in the methods section

2)(discretionary revision)

Findings are now presented in two paragraphs, but the headings of these two paragraphs do not capture the content. In the first paragraphs (reflections from patients and family carers) also views from the HCP are included. I would prefer more content based headings, maybe more or less following the research questions.

3)(discretionary revision)

I assume that some parts of the Findings section suit better in the discussion paragraph (page 9 “At the time…planning for EOLC”) (page 10 “this may explain in part… relatively better.”) (page 14 “Guidance on ACP… opportunity”)

4)(discretionary revision)

In the abstract and methods section it is mentioned that group interviews were held with HCP. It is not clear to me which data in the results come from these group interviews.
5) (discretionary revision)
In the abstract in the findings paragraph it is only mentioned that staff is hesitant to start conversations, but in the results it appears that also patients themselves are hesitant. I would add that finding to the abstract, as it is an important one and also mentioned in the conclusion of the paper.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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