Reviewer’s report

Title: The ACA training programme to improve communication between general practitioners and their palliative care patients: development and applicibility

Version: 2 Date: 22 March 2012

Reviewer: Geoffrey Mitchell

Reviewer’s report:

This is an educational review of the ACA program of communication skills in palliative care for GPs. This is an area consistently identified as problematic for GPs. The workup to develop the ACA program is already published, and this work is testing feasibility and acceptability for GPs and GP trainees.

It is well written and thorough. What is missing is attempts to develop outcome measures, which would have been possible at the time but not possible to do now the courses are completed. Included in these could have been validated questionnaires of clinician competence and confidence/ self efficacy pre and post, or some sort of scoring of video-taped selected interviews with the actor/patient, for example.

So the paper is good as far as it goes. I think it is important that he abstract and the title has included limitations of the scope of the work

Major revisions
none

Minor revisions

1. There is reference to two different types of Likert scales, with the need to divide one in half to match the scale of the other. Why did this happen? This should be either in the methods section or the discussion section

2. There is reference to one group of GPs as being "more or less experienced" in palliative care. This needs clarification - there is a clear distinction between this group and the GP trainee group. How about just referring the non-trainees - as practicing GPs, or experienced GPs

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 have no competing interests.