Reviewer's report

Title: Predictors of early transition to palliative level of care among middle cerebral artery ischemic stroke patients and the influence of swallowing dysfunction: a retrospective cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 4 April 2013

Reviewer: Sarah Galbraith

Reviewer's report:

I thank the authors for their interesting responses to my first comments. The manuscript is now improved.

Minor Essential revisions remain as follows

Abstract
line 4 I suggest replace the word 'the' with 'some'.

Background
2nd paragraph, 'In one study 10% of palliative .......... delete the word 'on'

Methods
Page 6 3rd line of inserted corrections, delete the extra word 'were'

Pages 6 and 7 It is a little unclear whether palliative care physicians are always involved in family meetings, initially the manuscript states this is the case but subsequently suggests staffing at weekends results in patients transitioning to palliative care without a discussion with a palliative care physician. Minor rewording would make this clearer.

It would be useful clarification to state that all patients are offered artificial feeding if unable to swallow, irrespective of whether they transition early to palliative care or not. This could perhaps be added at the beginning of the amendments on page 6.

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:
No competing interests