Reviewer's report

Title: A qualitative study of Shared Care in the delivery of palliative care services in the community: Applying a scalar approach

Version: 1 Date: 10 January 2013

Reviewer: Bruce Rumbold

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My response to this manuscript is that the content is certainly worthy of publication but the way it is presented sells it short. The article is set up as a general discussion of sustainability illustrated by data from a study of palliative care teams in Ontario. A consequence is that much of the background material is written 'back to front': that is, the reasons for discussing themes like 'sustainability', 'scale' and 'health delivery context' only become apparent in the closing paragraphs of each section as the reader discovers why this idea is relevant. The effect is that the article lacks coherence because the rationale for the discussion is not immediately apparent.

I suggest that article be reframed to present the material as I assume it actually arose: as an enquiry into the factors that supported or threatened the sustainability of these teams. The article would then address a specific problem - challenges to maintaining the services - and analysis and discussion of the stakeholder responses would lead into the themes that currently are presented as background. Being specific about the Ontario context might also sharpen the policy critique that is alluded to in the conclusions. Grounding the discussion in the specific experiences of these teams would also make it easier for readers from other jurisdictions to identify the learning that is transferrable to their contexts.

I am reluctant to categorise these remarks as 'major compulsory revisions', but equally I'd be reluctant to support publication without revision that leads to greater coherence.

I'd like to comment on two further minor matters. One is in the outline of methodology, where process is described well but there is no indication at all of what participants were asked in the interviews. (Presumably this would be addressed in the sort of reframing I'm suggesting above.) The second is that there are several occurrences of a strange construction - its' - that should be changed to its.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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 I have no competing interests