Reviewer’s report

Title: Experiences of patients, family and professional caregivers with Integrated Palliative Care in Europe: protocol for an international, multicenter, prospective, mixed method study

Version: 2 Date: 25 August 2014

Reviewer: Gunn Grande

Reviewer’s report:

Minor Essential Revisions

This is a well written paper on an interesting multi-centre study. I have some minor comments which it would be helpful if the authors could address.

Page 4, line 80 onwards conflates the IPC approach itself and the study method used to evaluate its effectiveness, and could do with some tidying.

Page 7, line 143: local initiatives in the five countries will be ‘identified’ rather than collected? Furthermore, the selection criteria could do with a separate heading or box.

It could be clarified a bit better how the subsidiary questions tie together to inform the main research question. They seem a bit ‘sprawling’ at present.

Please explain on what basis a sample size of 138 was decided.

Will the recruitment procedure enable to participants to be recruited at a ‘similar’ time point (in their disease trajectory or contact with the IPC) to make comparison more meaningful?

Data collection: I know this is outlined in Table 2, but it would help if the text briefly draws the reader’s attention to the fact that different data are collected at different times (for instance semi-structured interviews are not conducted at all time points).

Please clarify further whether patients and carers will be interviewed together or separately. How will this work with telephone interviews?

A bit more explanation of the social network approach would help. For instance, are the data for this collected solely through the questionnaire?

It would be good if the analysis gave more indication of how the cases and models are likely to be compared.

Discretionary Revisions

Some of the ethics section may be condensed, as the audience here is a palliative care readership, rather than a general funding body, therefore may
need less convincing about the ethics.

**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:**

None