Reviewer's report

Title: Psychological processes that uninformed middle-aged, hospitalized, male Japanese cancer patients experience in resigned to death: in-depth interview study

Version: 3 Date: 28 April 2006

Reviewer: Linda Emanuel

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript contains an important study and apparently it has been done by a very dedicated primary investigator. The investigators should be encouraged to bring this report to a state that is suitable for publication since it provides an important addition to the body of literature.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Description of the cohort: Why is it described first as liver cancer patients and later as lung cancer? Why do these patients appear to be hospitalized from diagnosis till death? Why was data from patients who were informed of their diagnosis discarded? If possible the authors should retrieve that data and include it. It may provide only preliminary data but even that would be very interesting.

2. How can content analysis give rise to the concept of gates and an entire conceptual model? As I understand content analysis, it can identify areas, not build a model. The model is, nonetheless, interesting, and the data is an important addition to an important topic. The author should present the content analysis as the findings and offer a conceptual model (stages and gates) as a second matter. The conceptual model should be offered as consistent with but not the only possibility driven by the data in this study.

3. Explain more about the interviews. In what sense did the interviewer only listen? Later the process is described as supportive. What exactly was the interviewer allowed to say or convey in non-verbal ways? Why were the transcripts translated into English before content analysis? What was the process - eg was back translation used?

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The english language use is replete with errors. The author should work with a colleague who writes well in English as a first language and who can make a more logical and accessible presentation of information.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Many minor revisions are necessary. Until the major ones have been taken care of, it is not relevant to list the many small ones.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'