Reviewer’s report

Title: Psychological process from hospitalization to death among uninformed terminal liver cancer patients in Japan

Version: 5 Date: 27 July 2006

Reviewer: Christine McPherson

Reviewer’s report:

General
The article has undergone major revision, as detailed by the corresponding author. As a consequence, rather than a review of the suggested revisions in my two previous reviews, the paper as a whole has been thoroughly reviewed.

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

Introduction
The four types of awareness identified by Glaser and Strauss and the Japanese study by Kashiwagi needs to be explained, since they contribute to understanding the current study and the authors’ suggest that their study is more verifiable. It is difficult to gauge this from the information given.

Methods and analysis
The authors stated that they used grounded theory and later make reference to content analyses in the second sentence last paragraph of the analysis section, in the first sentence of the section entitled Model development of the psychological process, and again in the last sentence of the first paragraph of the discussion section.

My previous concern was the reason why so many participants were interviewed given that saturation occurred with much fewer participants, and the ethical implications of this. The author has not addressed this concern and do not make any reference to how the sample size was determined in the current manuscript.

The methods and analysis sections do not contain enough information about how the researchers conducted their analysis. I would suggest elaborating on these processes.

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

Discussion:
Line 9 of paragraph 5. The sentence Unlike two previous studies... needs references to the studies added.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
A schematic overview of the model would improve the clarity of the findings and how the stages relate to one another, and the gates.

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

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'