Reviewer's report

Title: Associations between successful palliative cancer pathways and community nurse involvement

Version: 12 Date: 12 August 2009

Reviewer: Victor Kiri

Reviewer's report:

I agree with the two reviewers that by definition, the main outcome (i.e. successful palliative pathway) and home death are likely to enjoy some measure of relationship- call it self evident association by definition. This concern is compounded by the problem of selection bias rightly acknowledged by the authors as a major weakness of the study. From the statistical perspective, two additional issues also present themselves: (1) “home death and “nursing home-death” may not sufficiently qualify as independent factors with respect to the outcome variable and (2) the sample size is not large enough to command sufficient power for any meaningful conclusion from the estimates. Indeed, the acknowledged shortcomings of this study may account for the reported associations.

Major Compulsory Revision:
Address the problem of inherent dependency (by definition) between the main outcome and some of the factors being assessed for possible association with it.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests