Reviewer's report

Title: Barriers and needs in paediatric palliative home care in Germany: a qualitative expert survey

Version: 1 Date: 16 March 2010

Reviewer: Jayne Price

Reviewer's report:

I really enjoyed reviewing this article regarding provision of children’s palliative care in Germany.

MAJOR COMPULSARY REVISIONS

1. It would seem essential that issues of rigour were addressed clearly in the methods section - how was rigour ensured?

2. From an ethical perspective, was any follow up support offered to any professional who may have been distressed? It would be useful if this was made clear.

3. Please check the titles on quotations are these people identifiable? For example head of children's palliative care team??

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

4. Ensure all references are up to date for example the ACT document was updated last year 2009.

5. Remove repetition about collecting data until no new themes emerged. This is mentioned in 2 different places. Mention it once only.

6. The subtheme of 'struggling' amidst Legal and financial regulations needs further explanation in the text and also looks slightly out of place in the table.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

7. I would change the title, to something that makes clear the general thrust of the paper to the reader from the outset. A title that more accurately reflects the study being described. 'Expert survey' to me is ambiguous. After I read the title, I thought it was possibly the perspectives of expert parents. In fact it is health and social care professionals, why not add this terminology to the title. I would also tend to say a qualitative study.

8. The term 'experts' is used all the way through I think one explanation that you enlist the help of professionals who work with children who have palliative care needs and their families is suffice and then refer to professionals.
9. I wasn't sure what (...) meant in the transcriptions - perhaps make this clearer for the reader.

10. The terms survey and study are used interchangeably, use one and thereafter be consistent throughout, eg likely study.

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

**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.