Reviewer’s report

Title: Paediatric palliative home care by general paediatricians: a multimethod study on perceived barriers and incentives

Version: 3 Date: 15 February 2010

Reviewer: Alexandra M Clavarino

Reviewer’s report:

Significance of question:
Major Compulsory Revisions
The authors have undertaken a study of community based paediatric palliative care in one region in Germany.
1. While this is an interesting study, the authors need to establish the relevance this study has outside Germany.

Methods:
The authors have undertaken a 2 phase approach to the study. In the first phase a small number of paediatricians were interviewed – on the basis of this (and a literature search) a questionnaire was developed for administration to general pediatricians' in one region.

Major Compulsory Revision
There are several methodological issues that need to be addressed:
2. Phase 1 – Qualitative study: this requires more detail and needs to describe the way in which the qualitative data were collected and analysed. It is not sufficient to say ‘qualitative content analysis’ was used. The authors need to describe how the data was collected and who it was collected from. They need to describe the process used to analyse the data and any consideration they gave to ensuring the quality of that data.

3. Phase 2 – The survey: the authors need to justify the sample size (it is not at all clear why 300 respondents were considered to be the number of surveys needed). The authors need to supply power calculations or to at least provide some information about how closely their sample matches the demographic /clinical characteristics of general paediatricians in their region.

Minor Grammatical errors:
There are a number of minor grammatical errors that should be corrected before accepting this article for publication. For example in the description of the sample for the questionnaire survey the authors write “The majority of questionnaires was (this should read ‘were)… A small number of questionnaires (n=19) was (this should read ‘were”). There are a number of similar examples throughout the paper. They are of very minor concern however.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests: 

"I declare that I have no competing interests'