Reviewer’s report

Title: The use of opioids at the end of life: a survey of experienced barriers in pain management and knowledge level of physicians

Version: 4 Date: 14 September 2010

Reviewer: Romayne Gallagher

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for asking me to review the second submission as it is greatly improved.

Major compulsory revision

1. In discussion about the use of opioids for euthanasia I note that the statement is made that a reduction in the use of opioids for euthanasia may be accompanied by an increase physician knowledge about pain management. This is not backed up by any data and as the study says this is the Netherlands first study of physician knowledge. I think this statement needs removing.

Also the reference stating that attention to palliative care has increased is not a study but a government report. Reference 58 seems an inadequate reference to support the increase in palliative care in the country and if it does include unbiased data then it should be elaborated on more fully.

2. Minor Essential Revisions

Spelling mistakes seen.

Discussion section; Hastening the end of life section; paragraph 3, sentence 3 has an error and is missing words. Overall the language is much better and it is more easily readable.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.