Reviewer’s report

Title: Implementing advance care planning: a qualitative study of community nurses' views and experiences

Version: 1 Date: 17 March 2010

Reviewer: Colleen C Cartwright

Reviewer’s report:

REVIEW:
This is a timely and very useful report which has international significance. In particular the paper identifies an issue which is becoming apparent in many jurisdictions, i.e. the need for Advance Care Planning to be more than a series of “ticks” on an instructional document which may not adequately reflect the real needs and concerns of patients. It also highlights that it is essential that ACP does not just become another policy to be implemented but instead meets its “potential for ACP in its broadest sense to contribute to better end of life care” (p4).

The Discussion section would have been strengthened if possible solutions had been proposed to some of the identified challenges (e.g. how to ensure that Advance Care Planning does not become a routine, tick-box, policy response) but this does not detract from the value of the paper and would be Discretionary Revision only. I request no Minor Essential nor Major Compulsory Revisions.

In relation to the questions asked for the review:
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes
3. Are the data sound? Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes, although there are a small number of edits required; (e.g.
   • on p 8, third last line, the word ‘of” has been left out between “formalisation” and ‘everyday practice”;
   • on p15, 2nd last line, the word “as” has been left out between “identified” and “a
key barrier”;

• on p20, 3rd last line, the word “with” has been left out between “out of step” and “GPs and hospital doctors”;
• on p21, 5th last line, the word “to” has been misplaced – it should be in front of, not following, the word “meet”;
• hyphens have not been used where I believe they should be [e.g. for end-of-life care; day-to-day care planning; face-to-face; life-limiting] but I assume such matters will be attended to by the editors).

I recommend that this paper by published and I congratulate the authors for a useful and interesting piece of work.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 that I have no competing interests