Reviewer's report

Title: Laughter and Humor as Complementary and Alternative Medicine to Dementia Patients

Version: 1 Date: 19 January 2010

Reviewer: Mary Bennett

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2. The entire first part of the article was basic information about dementia, which could be found in a number of other articles and textbooks. Other than the current information about aging demographics in Asia, most of this material is common knowledge for those in the health care field. I would recommend greatly reducing this part of the article and focus on the lesser known information concerning the effect of humor on patients with dementia.

3. It is not clear from this article where the information on the effects of humor on patients with dementia is coming from. If this was an intervention research study, then I would expect to see some information on the study participants, intervention, outcome measures, etc. If this is a review of the literature, it is not clear what studies have actually been conducted in this population.

Minor Essential Revisions

The figure is very difficult to understand from the information we are given. I am not sure what might make it easier to understand, and maybe this information would be best presented as text as it does not seem to lend itself to a graphical representation.

Discretionary Revisions

The information concerning the facial muscle involvement during a smile is helpful, but more information about the other physiological effects of laughter should be addressed (respiratory changes, effects on immune function, etc). This information is available from several reviews, but a brief mention of the data for the uninitiated would be helpful. A basic review of humor and health can be downloaded from here http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/nurs_fac_pub/ I would also recommend

Martin R. Humor, laughter, and physical health: methodological issues and research findings. Psychol Bull 2001;127:504–19

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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'