Reviewer's report

Title: Reporting of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide in the Netherlands: descriptive study

Version: 2 Date: 5 July 2009

Reviewer: Lieve Van den Block

Reviewer's report:

This is a clear written paper, straightforward and easily readable. I have no major remarks, only a few suggestions for the authors.

No Major Compulsory Revisions

Minor essential

1. In the abstract: Can the research questions be made explicit in the background section?

2. In the abstract: The reference to the Oregon review system in the Conclusion is not clear for the reader who has not seen the whole manuscript. I would advice to reformulate the last sentence, or replace with another element of the Discussion section.

3. In the Results section: part about “information”. Can you add (somewhere in the paragraph) that it concerns information about the prognosis?

4. Table 3: footnote 3 “in some cases”: how many exactly?

Discretionary

1. In the Background section: I don’t think it is necessary to mention the comparison with Oregon as part of the objective of this study. The paper mainly focuses on the description of the cases and the evaluating the quality of the reports. The Dutch-Oregon procedure is only compared a little in the final paragraph. I would like to suggest incorporating everything about the Oregon procedure in the Discussion section.

2. In the Methods section: some aspects of the study design might be explained in more detail e.g. were there cases not approved that were excluded, why take the last 83 only and how many were not studied (did you check differences?), what do you mean with the stratification? Also, can the checklist be included?

3. In the Discussion section: there is a lot of information overlap with the Results section. Perhaps the discussion can be shortened.

4. The authors indicate there is room for improving the report form. On the basis of their experience, can some specific suggestions be incorporated?

5. It might be important for the reader to incorporate the reporting rate of euthanasia i.e. this report gives insight into how many of all cases in the Netherlands?
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 that I have no competing interests.