Reviewer’s report

Title: Malnutrition and responsibility in elder care - high-level decision-makers' ethical reasoning

Version: 6 Date: 6 January 2010

Reviewer: Tommy Cederholm

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The manuscript “Malnutrition and responsibility in elder care – high-level decision-makers ethical reasoning” provides interesting qualitative data on the issue. A problem often encountered in community care is the difficulty to implement knowledge about nutritional routines and care into everyday practices. An interesting deduction from this study is the fact that political decision-makers hand the responsibility for nutritional care to the care-givers, whereas care-givers (as cited in the article) tend to place the responsibility at the management level.

Major remarks:
- Provide information on how the interviews were organised as obviously interviews from the same group of decision-makers are used for a somewhat similar paper in BMC Med Ethics 2007.
- Reduce the Background text at least by 20%.
- Reduce the no. of references.
- Provide more information on how the interview subjects were selected.
- Which are the limitations of this study?

Minor remarks:
- Give study design in the Title.
- The conclusion in the abstract is mainly compiled of potential implications. Reduce the implications (place them in the Discussion section) and give the conclusions justified by the data instead. Implications are usually hypothesis for new studies.
- Discuss more clearly the limitations of education as the only mean for implementing functional nutritional routines.

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.