Reviewer’s report

Title: Inapplicability of advance directives in a paternalistic setting: the case of a post-communist health system

Version: 3 Date: 1 April 2011

Reviewer: Thaddeus Pope

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MINOR ESSENTIAL

1. There seems to be a tension or contradiction between the use of amanete described in the abstract (pessimistic) and that described in the discussion section (optimistic).

2. "Dislocate . . . senseless" - It seems that the authors meant "sensible" here.

3. The paper require some copy-editing. Even in the very first line, Albania should read "Albanian: since it is used as an adjective.

4. Another example of copy-editing: "94 years old"

DISCRETIONARY

1. My major concern with the paper remains that there are so many distinct issues raised, and the structure does not make those transitions between and relationships among the different issues clear and transparent. The issues include: (a) no legal vehicle to refuse, (b) dead people admitted to ICU, (c) families unwilling to consent to stopping even if they had the legal authority, and other issues. Nevertheless, I appreciate that the precise issue in Albania may be that there is not a sufficient vocabulary or tradition that makes the conceptual distinctions.

2. The first sentence is four lines long. It would read better to break into smaller sentences.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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.