Reviewer’s report

Title: Defining futile life-prolonging treatments through Neo-Socratic dialogue

Version: 1 Date: 15 October 2013

Reviewer: Narifumi Nakaoka

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary Revisions

Neo-Socratic dialogue (in the following: NSD) can admittedly be more useful than questionnaires or interviews to identify some socially acceptable basic agreements, because participants of NSD, as moral agents, can develop multi-faceted clarifications and solutions interactionally, in more reflective manner, based on specific cases regarding controversial topics.

However, the authors are to note the following points, at least for the sake of methodical improvements in the future:

- NSD, used in such cases, has the problem of representativity just as other types of participatory technology assessment (pTA) do, because it is not questionless whether results of NSD attended by only a limited number of persons can represent universal views;
- It is to be examined and reexamined if description of the implemented NSD and organization of the views of NSD participants by the authors is really appropriate and justifiable;
- It is to be reconsidered to what extent the NSD conclusions could be checked or modified by arguments and knowledge of the authors acquired elsewhere.

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.