Reviewer's report

Title: To Evaluate the Effectiveness of Health Care Ethics Consultation Based on the Goals of Health Care Ethics Consultation: A Prospective Cohort Study with Randomization

Version: 1 Date: 29 September 2013

Reviewer: Atsushi Asai

Reviewer's report:

The question posed by the authors is well defined and limitation of the work is clearly stated. The title and abstract convey what has been found in this study. However, the description of the methods used is not sufficient and more information is need in their discussion.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1 In the Background section, the authors should mention about current situations regarding health care ethics consultation (HCEC) in other Asian countries as well as Taiwan.

2 In the Methods section, several important points are missing and the authors must completely describe who did what in the study. Otherwise, the authors would not be able to understand what actually happen in this study.

2-1 What kind of person is an individual ethics consultant? What kind of training and qualification do they have? What kind of interventions and activities did they actually do in the HCEC group?

2-2 The audience need to know current and standard situation of ethics consultation activities in the National Taiwan University Hospital. Otherwise, the readers cannot judge the ethical appropriateness of use of the UC group and randomization.

2-3 There were 29 patients assigned to the UC group and only 4 of them received ethical service or support and the rest of 25 cases could not receive such help even if HCEC existed in the very same departments. Ethical justification must be provided.

2-4 The author must explain the randomization method they used.

2-5 The reason why the authors recommended the three ethics consultants in the intervention group to follow the suggestion by Aulisio et al should be explained.

2-6 In Data Collection section, they used the word "the morally acceptable options." What do the authors mean by this?

3 In discussion, the authors must explain current clinical ethics norms and legal
regulation relevant to ethical dilemmas in clinical settings in Taiwan and compare with them with those in the Western countries. Discussion concerning cultural difference is necessary.

**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.