Reviewer’s report

Title: Medical error disclosure: from the therapeutic alliance to risk management. The vision of the new Italian code of medical ethics.

Version: 2
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Reviewer: Nicola Magnavita

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This article is very interesting because it is a very timely topic, especially in light of the change of the Italian code of medical ethics.

A number of recommendations can be given to improve its readability and the practicality of the information provided.

Minor Essential Revisions
[1] The abstract contains the same sentences of the article. Consequently it is too long. A summary is highly desirable.

[2] In the discussion of the possible diagnostic and therapeutic problems that must be communicated to the patient, the authors focused on adverse effects. In reality, medical drawbacks come from two broad categories: alongside of those related to procedures and treatments, that cause direct harm and are often self-evident, there are misdiagnoses. The analysis of civil liability claims against Italian radiologists show that the latter are more common than the first ones. [ref.: Fileni A, et al. Radiological malpractice litigation risk in Italy: an observational study over a 14-years period. AJR Am J Roentgenol. 2010;194(4):1040-6.]. If the error causes bodily harm, informing the patient of the error is a moral obligation, which in the United States is also a legal obligation [ref.: Gallagher TH, Studdert D, Levinson W. Disclosing harmful medical errors to patients. N Engl J Med 2007;356:2713–2719]. It’s been stated that also diagnostic errors should be promptly disclosed to the patient [Magnavita N, et al. Ethical problems in radiology. Medical error and disclosure. Radiol Med. 2009;114(8):1345-55.]. However, many physicians don’t report diagnostic errors they have committed [Kaldjian LC, et al. Reporting medical errors to improve patient safety: a survey of physicians in teaching hospitals. Arch Intern Med 2008; 168:40–46]. Authors should clearly indicate what is their position in this regard.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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