Reviewer's report

Title: Are there relevant differences between hymen restoration in order to avoid honour related violence and special treatment in order to avoid blood-transfusion for Jehovah's Witnesses?

Version: 2 Date: 10 November 2014

Reviewer: Stuart Oultram

Reviewer's report:

This is a provocative paper which should add to the pre-existing debate on the construction of cultural and religious exceptionalism in medicine.

However, before a final decision can be made regarding publication I would ask that the authors consider the following:

- The authors examine 14 issues which they use to support the central argument of the paper.

However, trying to cover so many in such a relatively short space of time resulted in an analysis that felt rushed.

Therefore it might be better to reduce the number of issues covered in favour of increasing the analysis of those that remain.

For example, (unless there are good reasons for retaining them) my feeling is that issues 4, 5, and 11 could all potentially be dropped without harming the paper.

As for additional/expanded analysis I felt that issue number 13 needed further detailing - especially given that the authors themselves recognise this as an important issue.

In particular:

Lines 262 to 263
The Authors note that "it could be argued . . . . . ect"

Please set out the rationale for the argument

Lines 270 – 272
The authors need to set out clearly the rational for the ‘expressive argument’ they are seeking to engage with

Lines 271 – 279
The authors make two substantive claims / identify two alleged problems with the
‘expressive argument’.

I feel both of these need further explanation and justification – at present coverage is too brief.

Also, please contextualise these points with the main argument in the paper.

Lines 280 – 283

I do not understand what this observation adds to the paper?

I would recommend that it is removed.

**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'