Reviewer's report

Title: Are there morally relevant differences between hymen restoration and bloodless treatment for Jehovah's Witnesses?

Version: 3  Date: 25 November 2014

Reviewer: Brian Earp

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript is very much improved since the original submission. Just a few remaining, minor, issues which I trust the authors will be able to address without further review from me. The manuscript should certainly be published once these small details are attended to.

Line 28 - "operations of Jehovah's Witnesses" should be "operations on"

Line 31 - "These may seem as" should be "These may seem to be"

Line 32 - "reveal" should be "reveals" and "some" should probably be "a number of" ... also "one closer" is a typo and should be "on closer" (or "upon closer") ... so: "... a comparison reveals a number of tacit values in health care that we, upon closer examination, would want to get rid of." Those are just grammatical issues. However, logically, I'm not sure I understand this sentence. I think what is meant is something like: "a comparison between them reveals a number of tacit values in health care that apply equally to both. These values, we argue, are morally problematic." ... Is that what the authors mean? If so, I don't grasp this meaning from the way the sentence is currently phrased, and something like what I have suggested would be clearer.

Line 33 -- I think there are logical mistakes in this sentence: that is, if I understand the authors' argument correctly, this sentence is garbled and does not actually say what they intend. Right now it reads: "Hence, we argue that there are morally relevant differences" ... but I think the authors mean that there are NO morally relevant differences, isn't that so? And then the authors say, "... or, last least, that they are important enough to justify assessing them differently as is the current case." But again, here, I believe the authors mean that these differences, if they exist, are NOT important enough to justify assessing the two practices differently. The word "them" in line 34 is also ambiguous: it could be referring to the "morally relevant differences" or the practices (i.e., hymen restoration or bloodless treatments), and it is only the second of these that is meant. So, taking all of these issues together, a much clearer sentence would be: "Hence, we argue that there are not morally relevant differences, or, at least, that they are not important enough to justify assessing the two practices as differently as is currently the case."

Line 55 - the word "we" assumes that the reader is a 'Westerner' ... better would be: "In 'western' societies, by contrast, honour-related norms are generally
considered to be obsolete and dysfunctional."

Line 61 - a comma is needed after "families" so: "Since very few of these young females ... are prepared to leave their families, they might turn ..."

Line 69 - Governmental does not need to be capitalized, unless it is part of the title of the National Centre (etc) ... More generally, the long title and its description as a governmental body is a bit cumbersome and confusing to read, as part of such a long sentence where the subject (official guidelines) and the verb (say) are so far apart. I think clearer would be: "The official guidelines -- as issued by, e.g., the National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women, a governmental body -- say that it has no medical function ..."

Line 184 - "healthcare" should be "healthcare professionals"

Line 299 - "the opposite seem" should be "the opposite seems"

Line 310 - "text" should be "paper" or "essay" perhaps - a much commoner way of saying it

Line 316 - "act as" would be much clearer as: "take other measures to" - so ... "it seems both possible and defensible for physicians to perform hymen restorations and at the same time take other measures to 'combat the outdated ...

Line 322 - "one gets the problem" is nonstandard English; it should be "one has the problem"

Line 330 - "honour culture" should be plural: "honour cultures"

Line 335 - "a difference in degrees" should be "a difference in degree" (i.e., singular) - this is just how the idiomatic phrase is

Line 340 - "incriminate" should be "incriminating"

Line 342 - What is meant by "expressions" ... ? Behaviors?

Line 343 - "if one still think" should be "if one still thinks"

Line 346 - "text" again is more usually stated "essay" or "paper"

Line 357 - "not relevant" should be "not morally relevant"

Line 358 - "There are, however" should be "There is, however"

Line 364 - "acceptable to make a difference" is unclear. Is something like, "acceptable to tolerate a difference" ... more what is meant?

Line 374 - typo: there is a 't' after "the" and before "different"

Line 386 - the comma after praiseworthy should be a semicolon -- ;
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.