Reviewer's report

Title: Evidence-based ethics? On evidence-based practice and the "empirical turn" from normative bioethics

Version: 1 Date: 9 September 2005

Reviewer: Jerome Singh

Reviewer's report:

1. Does the debate present a novel argument, or a novel insight into existing work?
I believe the paper is a bold take on an important and neglected issue. While some of the arguments forwarded are not entirely new, the paper highlights the issues in novel ways and is well argued. I found the paper engaging and thought-provoking.

2. Does the debate address an important problem of interest to a broad biomedical audience?
The paper will appeal to the journal's targeted readership (those interested in health care ethics).

3. Is the piece well argued and referenced?
Yes.

4. Has the author used logical arguments and sound reasoning?
Yes.

5. Is the piece written well enough for publication?
Yes.

Reviewer's report

I did not note any major omissions in the paper of literature on this subject matter. Neither do I believe that any cited literature was misquoted or misinterpreted.

- Minor Essential Revisions

I noted only one very minor grammatical error which can be found with a thorough reading of the work.

- Discretionary revisions

The only aspect which the author, perhaps, neglected to deal with is the tendency of major funding agencies, such as the NIH (which is steeped in empirical research), to give biased preference to funding empirical-based ethics research (vs. normative-based ethics research). How, if at all, is this factor impacting on the growth and increasing popularity of empirical-based ethics research and the decline of normative ethics? Should this tendency, ironically, be the focus of an empirical study to prove that it does occur?

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.