Reviewer's report

Title: Top 10 Health Care Ethics Challenges Facing the Public: Views of Toronto Bioethicists

Version: 2 Date: 2 May 2005

Reviewer: Karine Morin

Reviewer's report:

General

Ultimately, this article identifies disagreements between patients/families and health care professionals over futile treatments at the end of life as the top challenge encountered by clinical bioethicists, and proposes a 4-step action plan to address it. It remains this reviewer's belief that a discussion of the issue does not warrant a full-length publication of the "views" of clinical bioethicists on the top 10 health care ethics challenges in Canada (although revisions to the methods section were useful).

Moreover, without any additional references to either the bioethics literature or empirical data on the actual challenges that the Canadian health care system faces, or without a corroborating study of views from other health care stakeholders, including patients themselves, it is not possible for readers to assess the validity of the bioethicists' views, which critically undermines the value of the article.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

This reviewer recommends that the authors abandon the idea of publishing the results of their Delphi study, and simply use the research as the starting point for an article that discusses how to address "disagreements between patients/families and health care professionals..." that would elaborate on their 4-step action plan.

This can still garner public attention in Canada if published as a consensus report from clinical bioethicists at a leading Canadian centre for bioethics.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.