Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 26 April 2005

Reviewer: Jaya Rao

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper has undergone significant revisions and is improved. I have the following recommendations regarding the Delphi process that should be addressed.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1) The modified Delphi process presented in this paper is not typical because the authors convened an in-person meeting that included ranking and discussion. One of the potential limitations of an in-person consensus process is that a single expert could exert influence over the process on the basis of their expertise or personality (e.g., the halo effect). Usually, the participants in the Delphi are anonymous to each other as they perform the ratings of items, and this feature (anonymous ratings) is intended to limit the halo effect. Rounds 1 and 2 appear to be part of an item-generation process and should be labeled as such, and the authors should provide a justification for the in-person meeting (and ranking at that point) and how that might have influenced the choice of items that were included in the subsequent rounds in the discussion. Rounds 3 and 4 are consistent with a Delphi process and should be renamed as Rounds 1 and 2 of the Delphi rankings.
2) It is unclear if all 32 items that were included in Round 2 (the in-person meeting) were used in Round 3 and how many items were included in Round 4. This should be clarified.
3) Finally, the authors should describe how they made the decision to stop the rankings in the methods (i.e., why stop at 4 rounds?).

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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.