Reviewer's report

Title: Ethical challenges related to elder care. High level decision-makers experiences

Version: 3 Date: 15 December 2006

Reviewer: rudolf H ter meulen

Reviewer's report:

General

The revised version of this manuscript deals only partially with the comments I sent previously. Some of the answers to my comments are in the separate answer sheet, instead of in the article.

-----------------------------------------------

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

1) I asked for an analysis of the decisions by HDMs from the perspective of relational and action approach in ethics. Though these two perspectives are better explained on page 4, they do NOT come back in the analysis or discussion of the results at the end of the article. Instead the authors give such a brief, but very interesting (!) analysis in their accompanying letter under 7). This has to be explained and illustrated with narratives by the HDMs. I suggest that they incorporate these answers or rebuttals to my comments in the text of the article. Saying on page 8 that the HDMs in their narrations did not differentiate between the action perspective and the relational perspective is not enough.

2) I asked for a discussion of the value of the phenomenological-hermeneutical method: is it really giving a better analysis or added value compared to other ways of qualitative analysis? Why was this method 'useful', as the authors say? This issue is also briefly answered in the accompanying letter, but NOT in the article itself.

These issues should be dealt with in the text of the article.

-----------------------------------------------

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?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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

Prof. Ruud ter Meulen