Reviewer’s report

Title: Attitudes and behaviors of Japanese physicians concerning withholding and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for end-of-life patients: Results from an Internet survey

Version: 1 Date: 27 March 2007
Reviewer: Tore Nilstun

Reviewer’s report:

General

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

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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)

1) I do not think that "life-sustaining treatment" do exclude "futile for the patient". Some physicians do give the former when it is futile for the patient. But if this is part of the questionnaire, I feel that nothing could be done with it.
2) It is important to state when the ethics committee approved.
3) Sometimes the authors do repeat what is already said in the tables. This part of the paper could be a little shorter.
4) Nothing is mentioned about sex (female/male). If it does no affect the result, this should be stated.
5) A defence of cultural relativism apparent in the Discussion (end of page 20). If this is the opinion of the author, it should be made explicit.

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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 whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests