Reviewer's report

**Title:** Iranian Cancer Patients' Perception of Spirituality: A Qualitative Content Analysis study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 2 April 2012

**Reviewer:** John Paley

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a much improved version of the paper, and I am gratified to note that many of my suggestions have been acted on. In particular, the thematic presentation of findings, together with the discussion, now does full justice to the data in a way that the first version (in my view) did not quite manage. In addition, the recognition that people’s understanding of spirituality is going to be heavily influenced by the culture to which they belong, and that members of different cultures are very unlikely to make the same kinds of connection between spirituality and religion, gives the argument a much sharper focus.

**Minor essential revisions**

I would suggest three further enhancements, following which the paper could be published.

The first is that the introduction be rewritten, slightly, in order to reflect the analysis that follows. The later material acknowledges that ‘spirituality discourse’ will vary as between different types of culture, particularly in relation to the role that religion plays in any of them. The introduction, however, is not entirely consistent with this, since it makes a series of general assertions, implying (in effect) that there are cross-cultural truths about ‘spirituality’. From this point of view, the sudden introduction of Iranian cancer patients as the topic (‘... on the other hand...’) is a major surprise, something which has not been adequately prepared for. To compensate for this, I would suggest that the introduction say something about the cultural dependence of ‘perceptions of spirituality’ and add that, while much of the current literature focuses on the Christian religious culture of the US, and the more secular cultures of Europe, there is very little about Muslim cultures. In that context, an interest in the views of Iranian patients, as a contribution to the literature, makes much more sense. This does not require wholesale changes to the present version of the introduction, but it does imply additional comment and a few minor amendments.

Second, the style of referencing appears to be a hybrid, combining elements of both the Harvard and the Vancouver systems. Since the dominant style appears to be Vancouver, I would recommend that all referencing conforms to that standard.

Finally, the paper is not written in fully idiomatic English, and I would suggest that
the authors avail themselves of the services of a professional, someone who specialises in adapting texts prepared by academics whose first language is not English.

That done, I think the paper can be offered publication.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.