Reviewer's report

Title: Dignity in the Care of Older People - A Review of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature

Version: 1 Date: 4 December 2007

Reviewer: Anne A Davis

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REVIEW- Gallagher, A. et al
The debate as to whether "dignity" is a useful ethical and practice concept in the care of patients is focused on by reviewing the philosophical and sociological literature over a 50 year plus period to clarify the concept.

Specifically, this article:
1. Presents a novel insight by pulling together diverse literature
2. Addresses a very important problem in health care
3. Is well presented and well referenced. Dignity is operationalized
4. Is written well enough for publication

Advise

Discretionary revision- This article can be published as is, however, I think it would be greatly strengthened by replacing the Conclusion with some ideas as to why the lack of dignity in the care of older patients persists after all these years of discussion and is now a national concern in the UK. Using the 4 themes listed on page 15, the authors could raise some specific questions about each theme for further exploration and understanding. Why don't things change? Why does the gap remain between the ethical Ought and the clinical Is?