Reviewer's report

**Title:** Legal rights of client councils and their role in policy of long-term care organisations in the Netherlands

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 19 April 2011

**Reviewer:** Nanako Tamiya

**Reviewer's report:**

Overall, the manuscript was improved to some extent by following reviewers’ comments. However, still we have concerns below.

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

1- In the Results section, who would be the “people outside the homes (accounting up to 16%)”? Volunteers are not included in this group? What is the connection with the clients?

2- Despite the fact that some questions have been answered regarding a more detailed explanation of what a council is and the Participation by clients of Care Institutions Act, I find it hard to understand the definitions of the “Right to be consulted” and “Right to Consent”. They should be very important concepts through this paper. The explanation in p3 the second paragraph, “Councils are allowed to give an opinion and the explanation on p4, line 5 from the bottom: ‘right to be consulted (client council gives advise, but the management can ignore this advice), ‘right to consent (client councils gives permission on a subject which cannot be ignored by the management)’, are quite confusing. These meanings look different for me. Moreover, “Right to be consulted” and “Right to Consent” are put into two separate tables (Tables 2 and 3). It is difficult to understand clearly. Especially because each table itself is divided into categories that include “Right to be consulted” and “right to consent”.

3- Similarly, in the Results, 4th paragraph- In the same direction, the authors say: “The percentage of client councils that perceives their legal rights concerning financial matters, annuals report, and vision of the organization is higher on the response category ‘only informative’ than on the response category ‘right to be consulted’”. However, it is not taken into account that the category “Right to consent” is from a superior order, thus when considering the say of the clients have on these matters the percentage of “Right to be consulted” and “right to consent” should be summed up, because having the “right to consent” is more important than having just the “right to be consulted”. In this way, the clients exert their right more than 50% almost every time.

4- Background, 4th paragraph. I do not see how the client councils’ “right to consent” regarding the selection of an approved contractor to perform the
CQ-index survey works to embed measurements of client experiences in the decision-making process of the organization meaningfully. So, could you explain with more details how can the feedback be different if the Questionnaire, The CQ-index for the nursing and caring sector, is the same. Please?

5- Also, What do you mean with the expression:“...(with or without benchmark data)”

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

Methods

6-Second paragraph: Please pay attention to the distinction that must be made between a Likert scale and a Likert item. In this aspect, you mention a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from ‘totally disagree’ to ‘totally agree’) however you present a 3-point item. Please state this summary more clearly for the reader. Moreover, the sum of the percentages is 101% twice.

Discretionary Revisions

7- Typographical, grammatical errors or English expression:

P5 1st paragraph line 4- family members of “diseased” should be “dicedased”.

The expression "In more specific" should be “more specifically”.

P6 the 5th line from the bottom: client councils “exercise “. I am not sure what this “exercise “means.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.