Reviewer’s report

Title: Implementation of the quality management system in Lithuanian palliative care hospitals

Version: 1 Date: 23 January 2006

Reviewer: Margus Lember

Reviewer’s report:

General

The research question is new as it has not been studied earlier in Lithuania, it is of interest to the health policy in countries implementing palliative care systems.

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

1. The study question is too general; goal no.1 (determine the current QMS in Lithuanian palliative care hospitals) is not clear enough what might be the answer to this question, what is expected.

As the aim is to assess the implementation of quality management system- it is not clear why only one aspect (managerial satisfaction) is taken into consideration, why the staff perspective or patient perspective is ignored? Maybe it would be appropriate to reformulate the study question and to limit it only to the managerial assessment level- then it corresponds to the real study and results.

Therefore there is a need to reformulate the study questions and aims to make them corresponding to the own results.

2. The study group is not well defined. It seems that the results represent the opinions of the chiefs of the palliative care hospitals. Please be more precise.

3. The development of the questionnaire is not sufficiently described: who developed the questionnaire? Was it piloted before? How were the items chosen for the questionnaire? Etc. Was 7-point Likert scale used in all questions?

4. In the Results data about hospital size is provided and the authors obviously wished to demonstrate the differences in answers depending on the hospital size. There should be respective topic in the introduction and in the aims- this seems to be one of the key findings!

5. Do the authors have any comparable quality indicators from different size of hospitals? It seems that implementation of QMS is more successful in bigger hospitals, but is it related to real quality of care? - if not data available, the issue should be discussed in the Discussion.

6. Conclusions should be shortened and made more precise to correspond to the research aim.

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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. Table 2 and 3 lack legend describing the meaning of the numbers in table (mean). What is the logic in building table 3?
2. Please notice that in figures the titles should appear below the figure!

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:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No

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