Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Current advance care planning practice in the Australian community: a survey of Home Care Package case managers and service managers

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 3 January 2015

**Reviewer:** Deborah Carr

**Reviewer’s report:**

This straightforward descriptive paper uses recent survey data to assess the knowledge and practices of HCP case managers and service managers regarding advance care planning. The results show that a minority of services have formal ACP policies and procedures in place, although individual case workers find these practices to be important, and often take steps to encourage planning and end-of-life conversations among their clients. This paper makes a contribution by interviewing HCP workers – a large and growing yet under-researched force in encouraging ACP in Australia. I have a few suggestions for improving the persuasiveness and impact of the work.

1. Please provide more information on response rate and the extent to which the data may be generalizable to the larger pool of case and service managers. What was the total size of the sampling frame? That is, how many were on the “contact list provided by the CDH”? Were particularly types of communities omitted, such as poorer or more ethnically diverse ones?

2. Given the international readership of BMC Palliative Care, it would be instructive to learn a bit more about the larger context of ACP in Australia. Are there national policies to encourage ACP, such as the Patient Self-Determination Act in the United States? Or other macrosocial factors that may enhance/impede ACP, such as religious beliefs regarding end-of-life decision making. Even a short paragraph would be sufficient, to help situate the study findings in the larger social/political/economic context.

3. The sample size may preclude more fine-grained multivariate analysis, but I would be curious to see sources of variation in some of the responses (e.g., confidence levels, etc.). Might these responses vary based on characteristics of the service provide or their clients?

4. The discussion of the study implications and limitations was clearly and nicely done.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable
**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interest.