Reviewer’s report

Title: Palliative care professionals' willingness to perform euthanasia or physician assisted suicide

Version: 0 Date: 30 Aug 2015

Reviewer: Maxwell Vergo

Reviewer’s report:

1. Background needs to include that the authors performed a similar survey in 2012 at the same conference but this manuscript is distinguished from that (Zenz, Pain Ther, 2014) in that this asks physicians if they would actually perform the act instead of support it.

2. Background needs to set the stage for why these 2 populations of physicians were chosen beyond that they were the ones at the conference. I can understand palliative care's role in euthanasia and PAS, but in my experience pain physicians are very remote from this type of action and therefore don't have much practical experience (argued later by the authors to be a challenge to past surveys of non-specialists; lines 232-240). I don't think pain physicians would even be my control -- the generalists would be. Maybe more information about what the law (or other laws) include for what type of clinician can perform euthanasia or PAS could be helpful to frame this survey? The authors need to better explain why it was so important to measure pain physician's perspective on this survey or consider dropping them from the manuscript. It seems like a convenience sample given the way the manuscript read.

3. Page 10, line 216: As best as this reviewer can tell, the Seale reference was not a validation study of the survey. This needs to be re-phased if that is the case.

4. Page 11, line 245: This reviewer looked at the tables and results and understood that 7.1% of respondents would perform euthanasia and 15.7% PAS (lists 5.3% on this line). Clarification is needed. In addition, one in six physicians willing to perform PAS seems like it is not rare-- likely a significant minority. It is important to include the PAS stat in this section since it is mentioned in the intro line for this section (page 11, line 248).

5. Page 12: the survey was written for physicians -- especially the last 4 questions. I could see if they were asking advanced practice RNs who order medications routinely, but regular RNs would need a different survey in my mind. I think this paper is trying to accomplish too much and I suggest they remove the RN part of the survey -- it would work better as a separate paper if the authors so wished.

6. 23.7% of the population studied has no qualification in palliative medicine or pain medicine. Why did we not hear anything about this group? In a way, this could be a control group to both (although still biased as they were interested in this conference). In table 5, this subpopulation seemed to be more willing to perform euthanasia/PAS.
7. No p-values are listed in the tables. These need to be added to allow better interpretation of the primary data for the reader.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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