Reviewer's report

Title: Healthcare professionals' and patients' perspectives on consent to clinical genetic testing: moving towards a more relational approach

Version: 1 Date: 15 Dec 2016

Reviewer: Amy DeBaets

Reviewer's report:

I appreciate the authors' very specific responses to each of the items identified in the earlier feedback. They have made some important changes to the paper that have improved it, particularly the inclusion of specific definitions and examples of their key terms and the listing of some of the questions that were asked in the interviews and focus groups.

That said, they have not addressed the substance of the critiques of both reviewers in depth. The authors rely heavily on the idea that HCPs (though not those they interviewed) have only the thinnest conception of what "consent" means in a clinical context - a tick box approach. Their study does not offer evidence that this is the case, however, and the focus group evidence that is included seem to contradict this assumption, at least among those who are most commonly involved in current genetic testing in the clinical setting. Their substantive recommendations, that physicians be forthright and trustworthy in their interactions with patients instead of treating consent as a tick box or form to be signed, have existed in the literature for many years, so it is unclear what it is that they are offering that is not already a standard part of contemporary medical ethics education and expectation.

In addition to re-considering the initial feedback from reviewers, I would encourage the authors to clarify the following key items. First, the authors describe their methodology as a grounded theory approach and reject any other potential virtues or values as not reflective of their data (though the examples of possible other values given to the authors were drawn from the quotes included in the article). Their actual method is entirely opaque, however, and the description should reflect more of the process from which they draw their conclusions. What was the coding process? How were codes identified and compared to each other to increase reliability? This may seem like a minor issue, but it is the only thing the reader has to work with besides the assertion that the values identified were, in fact, the only possible core values drawn from the study. Their actual method is entirely opaque, however, and the description should reflect more of the process from which they draw their conclusions. What was the coding process? How were codes identified and compared to each other to increase reliability? This may seem like a minor issue, but it is the only thing the reader has to work with besides the assertion that the values identified were, in fact, the only possible core values drawn from the study. Their actual method is entirely opaque, however, and the description should reflect more of the process from which they draw their conclusions. What was the coding process? How were codes identified and compared to each other to increase reliability? This may seem like a minor issue, but it is the only thing the reader has to work with besides the assertion that the values identified were, in fact, the only possible core values drawn from the study. Second, it is very helpful for the authors to include their definitions and examples of terms, which were not given in the prior draft. Now that those terms are more clear, it seems that there is a great deal of overlap and interchangeability between openness and honesty. How do they differ and could they be combined as something like forthrightness? Third, it is still not clear what characterizes this as a virtue approach, as opposed to an alternative form of principlism. The descriptions of the values the authors identify are not described in terms of the character of physicians, but rather as specific, concrete actions to be used in interactions with patients.
I would recommend that the authors take a bit of time to work substantively with the prior set of comments from both reviewers as well as these follow up comments, which would help strengthen their article. Thank you for your work on this, and I look forward to reading the next version.

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

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
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