Reviewer’s report

Title: Autonomy and Couples' Joint Decision-Making in Health Care

Version: 0 Date: 19 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Reidun Førde

Reviewer’s report:

This is a most welcomed paper which focuses on the principle of respect for patient autonomy, an (non universal) ideal which in a way disregards that most human beings are "forced" by material conditions but also by our (for many of us willed and wanted) dependency on others, be it emotionally or for other reasons. As the authors claim: not all influence is controlling. Therefore respect for autonomy as a leading principle in decision making should indeed be problematized. However, with a gender imbalance in power almost world wide, as doctors and also ethicists we meet this issue particularly when treating women coming from non western cultures / continents. I miss a paragraph answering how one should approach these patients, in particular when serious decisions are to be made, e.g. end -of-life decisions, organ donation, serious prognostic information etc. How is power imbalance dealt with? This question is in particular important to address in these serious decisions, but it may be very difficult to deal with in a clinical setting!

It is a well written paper, and easy to follow, and I hope this paper will start a necessary debate. The example of breast reconstruction functions very well.

I have but a few comments / questions:

The structure of the paper is a bit strange: first background, and then "Main Text"?

Should the field of family ethics be referred to?

What about hidden power which can be present in "persuasion", persuasion then indeed becomes controlling. Hidden power exists in our part of the world as well.

Reference # 6 is incomplete.

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.

Unable to assess
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes

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Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
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