Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions and intentions toward medical assistance in dying among Canadian medical students

Version: 1 Date: 15 May 2018

Reviewer: Phillipa Malpas

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review: 'Perceptions of medical assistance in dying among Canadian medical students: Implications for policy and practice' (METH-D-18-00017R1).

The paper sets out to address the perspectives of Canadian medical students on medical assistance in dying. It's an important contribution to the research landscape in this area and one that has been largely neglected in other jurisdictions where assisted dying practices are legally permitted.

I did think that some parts of the discussion required further clarification. I have included these below. Please note that I am not qualified to comment on the kinds of statistical analyses used in the paper and so have not commented on this area.

Page 3, lines 43-44: In the past few months several more jurisdictions have legislated for medical aid in dying - Hawaii (Our Choice, Our Care Act, HB 2739) and Victoria in Australia (the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, from mid-2019).

Page 3, line 63: Here you refer to assisted dying but it is unclear if you mean MAID, or other practices that hasten death such as euthanasia. Furthermore, references 7 and 8 refer specifically to palliative sedation, or sedative practices. These are generally not viewed as practices encompassed by assisted dying (although I acknowledge this is a contentious and polarising issue within medical ethics. See the discussions by Billings and Block on terminal sedation as 'slow euthanasia'). Billings JA, Block SD. Slow Euthanasia. J Palliative Care. 1996;12(4):21 -30. Brody H. Commentary on Billings and Block's "Slow euthanasia". J Palliat Care. 1996;12(4):38-41. I think these two sentences (lines 63-65) need further clarification.

The title of the paper suggests a focus of the discussion will be on the implications for policy and practice. Yet this is not developed in the paper. You may want to consider tightening the title to better reflect your paper's focus.

Page 5, line 97-98: Clarification point. Can you please explain why the term PAD was used in the survey tool when the term MAID was the one being used in legislation, and presumably the term Canadians were more familiar with? PAD excludes the involvement of nurse practitioners who are legally authorised to act, whereas MAID includes their involvement.
Minor typos:
Page 2, line 23: 'analyse' should be 'analyzed'.

Page 2, line 33: 'changed' should be 'changing' (which makes it consistent with use at line 68 (pg 4). See also line 271 (pg 13).

Page 11, line 235: You don't need the date after the Lee citation (1996) as the full bibliographic details are given in the reference section. Ditto the dates after the Beauvais (2016) ref at line 238, and Lucchetti (2014) at 248.

Regards, Phillipa Malpas

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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.

Yes

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

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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