Reviewer’s report

Title: Ghent University Hospital's Protocol Regarding the Procedure Concerning Euthanasia and Psychological Suffering

Version: 0 Date: 11 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Suzanne Van De Vathorst

Reviewer's report:

The article is certainly of interest to other people working in hospitals in jurisdictions that allow for euthanasia in psychiatry. Still, it would be even more instructive if it could describe which cases are rejected on the basis of this procedure (did it filter out patients, did the HEC, the first, second or third psychiatrist refuse?), and explain how it works in practice. Now it merely describes rules and intentions. Does the HEC not keep notes of its meetings? To say that nothing can be said about the patients who were eligible for euthanasia also seems a bit too easy. Surely something can be said on age, sex, diagnosis, without compromising patient confidentiality? It is unsatisfying to read 'anecdotal evidence suggests'. Is it really impossible to say any more? Similarly the phrase "this was developed with depressive patients in mind", evokes the question how the protocol doesn't fit the other patient groups?

So to sum up, the article is well written and to some extent informative, but the feeling persists that it should be possible to say more about the actual practice, maybe even do some formal evaluation of the guideline that has existed for several years now. That would certainly be a lot more informative for others who wrestle with these issues.

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?
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Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes
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Quality of written English
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