Reviewer’s report

Title: Refusals to perform ritual circumcision: A qualitative study of doctors’ professional and ethical reasoning

Version: 1 Date: 18 Nov 2019

Reviewer: Daniel Rodger

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting and well written qualitative study that explores the views of Norwegian urologists who refuse to perform ritual circumcision.

Rewording/typos:

Page 3, line 44: 'In Norway, it is primarily Muslim and Jewish parents who want their sons to be circumcised…'

Page 5, lines 15-17: '…urologic [US spelling] surgeons, paediatric [UK spelling] Surgeons'. I suppose just consistency in the spelling of terms, in the UK urologic surgeon would be urological surgeon. Urological is used throughout the rest of the manuscript.

Page 14, line 14: 'Yet, as regards to the centrality of the…'

Page 16, lines 17-19: '…the issue has become personally serious, but the moral gravity and felt seriousness appear to be significantly lower than in the study on CO to abortion' - Consider rephrasing.

General summary:

The abstract contains all of the essential components.

The background sets the study in its European context by explaining the public and professional differences in views from the United States. Although, it might be worth mentioning the recent guest editorial in the American Journal of Bioethics - Medically Unnecessary Genital Cutting and the Rights of the Child: Moving Toward Consensus. A number of US scholars were involved with this and perhaps it would be fair to note an increase in critical views there too.

Analysis of the transcripts was clearly described and demonstrates methodological rigour.

The results were clear and supported with good examples. It would be a good idea to include the questions used in the interviews as an appendix.

The discussion explores the results in light of the wider literature and the authors highlight the strengths and limitations of the study.

The conclusion is clear and rightly summarises some of the problems with sharply distinguishing between professional and conscientious refusals in healthcare as illustrated in the interviews.
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?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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