

Dear Navjoyt,

Thank you for considering our Analysis article 'Embracing inherent uncertainty in advanced illness'. We are delighted that you would like to publish it. We have revised our manuscript in line with the helpful suggestions of the two reviewers as follows: The article is now shorter (just over 1500 words) with more headings, a table to illustrate how uncertainty affects people with diverse illnesses and half the number of references.

We did not refer specifically to 'treatment escalation plans' but do mention treatment escalation as there are a number of projects across the UK just now which are developing documents for recording such plans with different names.

We have reduced the contents of our box and clarified that these are suggestions that practitioners might find helpful when discussing uncertainty with their patients.

While we accept that it very important to give patients and families an idea of what to expect, our argument centres on a critique of current policies that have not taken account of the lack of evidence that any prognostic tools are accurate enough to provide reliable or meaningful information for individual patients with complex multimorbidity. The recent BMA review clearly states this.

We agree that even in cancer many people's final illness is not as predictable as the trajectory of rapidly progressive forms of cancer but we have not discussed this in the revised paper as it is not as relevant as other points we wish to make.

We agree that uncertainty is a universal life experience and does indeed allow people to hope for the best – we think this is reflected in our paper.

We apologise that we lost the track changes in the document after we have made them all and thus have uploaded a clean copy of the news version rather than a marked up one. Comparing it with the original submission you will see that we have greatly shortened the second paragraph by inserting a summary box of patients experiences. We have also removed a few sentences which were repetitive and tightened the document up including the suggestions above. If you still feel you still need a marked up copy we would be happy to do this.

With many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Kirsty Boyd