Reviewer's report

Title: Self-Management Experiences among Men and Women with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A Qualitative Analysis

Version: 1 Date: 4 June 2012

Reviewer: Teresa Sakraida

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed original, important and well defined? MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISION

The objective of this study is clearly stated in last paragraph under Background as “to explore diabetes management experiences specifically needs, challenges, and barriers identified by men and women.” The background includes information about experiences in relation to roles and challenges, however discussion about barriers is missing and would be a strong addition.

An assumption is that there are differences in how men or woman respond in their illness attitudes and behavior. This suggests another variable of social learning of illness behavior. Later in the paper, there is observation of cultural differences and in the background this could be a factor to discuss as well.

This is a valuable addition to the literature as gender sensitive information could further refine self-management treatment practices.

2. Are the data sound and well controlled? MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISION

The methods section requires reordering to include the Ethics review (mentioned last paragraph p. 4) prior to screening, consent, and data collection. The procedure included the use of thematic network analysis. It is worthwhile to provide a brief definition of this analytic technique and the rationale for selection. In the discussion of the thematic network analysis you noted four authors and were all authors diabetes experts? There were 78 emergent codes that were clustered and formed how many preliminary themes? So clarify with a statement, the next step of thinking about the preliminary themes in relation to sex. Did this entail returning to the narratives in the transcripts and identifying the emphasis/focus by men or women?

Please list the 5 overarching themes in a statement in last paragraph prior to the results section.

It is appropriate to discuss qualitative rigor. Qualitative rigor involves establishing trust or confidence in the findings or results of a research study and includes four components of trustworthiness: (a) truth–value (credibility); (b) applicability (transferability); (c) consistency (dependability); and (d) neutrality (confirmability).

3. Is the interpretation (discussion and conclusion) well balanced and supported by the data?
More than half of the participants were foreign born and no information is provided as to time spent in health care system and whether there is assimilation to mainstream role expectations and if role expectations were informed by cultural beliefs. A question is whether culturally based sex-role norms are a factor to consider in the analysis? This is noted in the Limitations statement.

The identification of barriers is noted in the study objective and it would be useful to include statements about barriers i.e. personal barriers, barriers for men, barriers for women.

4. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to allow others to evaluate and/or replicate the work?
   The selection of qualitative methods are appropriate for the study aim.

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methods?
   The authors specified the limitations very well.

6. Can the writing, organization, tables and figures be improved?
   Suggest adding a note to Table 1 indicating that the interview guide was based upon the Brewer-Lowry Self-Management Framework.
   The addition of a box figure with display of differences and what is similar may be helpful in presentation of the results.
   In the discussion section, it may be helpful to include subheadings of differences and alike in some ways.

7. When revisions are requested.
   Reviewers may recommend revisions for any or all of the following reasons: data need to be added to support the authors’ conclusions; better justification is needed for the arguments based on existing data; or the clarity and/or coherence of the paper needs to be improved.

8. Are there any ethical or competing interests issues you would like to raise?
   None discerned during this review.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.