Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 23 August 2012

Reviewer: Katarina Hjelm

Reviewer’s report:


Major Compulsory Revisions:

This is an interesting topic but the paper need to be revised particularly as concerns background literature, methodological description and reporting of analysed data which is imbalanced and the themes reported are not supported by the presented data. However, it can be improved.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined

The question posed is very broad but ok. However, in the Background there is a problem as the objective is to focus on “exploring diabetes management experiences, specifically needs, challenges, and barriers identified by men and women…” and thus it is to be expected that the literature presented should be focused on self-management and gender issues but this is not the case. It is also written “The relevant body of literature reports differences…” and which is the relevant literature? Why isn’t there literature describing previous studies on e.g beliefs about health and illness in men and women or gender issues related to beliefs about health and illness that might underlie and direct self-management? There are e.g studies concerning this by Hjelm et al that can be used.

Further, I do not agree with the sentence “…the research to date has relied on quantitative methods that primarily elicit knowledge, attitudes and beliefs…..using scales” as there are qualitative studies not used. Thus, the literature in the background need to be focused.

The aim stated is different in the paper, the abstract and in the Discussion! There should just be one and the same in the whole paper.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

No, not in its present form.

There is a lack of information about:

1) the study design and the motive for the choice of it. An answer on what year the study was undertaken.

2) A clear description of how participants were recruited and by whom, as well as
the data collection procedure and how the interview guide was developed and what differed between focus-group interviews and individual interviews.

3) I do lack methodological literature on focus-groups and motives to the group sizes and a description of how the groups were composed. Further, something about the group dynamics under the interviews. How long did the interviews last? Where were they held? Audio-taped or not? Transcribed and then by whom?

4) It is not clear either in the methods section or the discussion how the self-management frame-work by Brewer-Lowry et al was used, please explain! And connect to the data analysis. Was the data analysis made inductively or deductively or abductively?

5) Please add an example of coding scheme as an appendix.

6) When reading the methods section I do lack information about matters of trustworthiness and rigour were handled.

7) I would like to see a clear and concrete description of how the 4 basic ethical principles were handled throughout the whole study both for Focus-group participants and those interviewed individually by telephone.

8) From the Discussion part it is told that a secondary analysis was made but this is not told about in the Methods section, why not? What does it mean to the results?

3. Are the data sound?

Please see above! And be aware of that there is an imbalance in the Results section between what is said under the themes and the support with quotations. In many places there is a lack of quotations supporting the text. It seems that more quotations have been chosen from males than females. Another example is on page 7, second paragraph there is no support for the two different strategies. Need to be changed so that there are illuminative quotations describing the pattern found and also that the text under each theme is in concordance with its content. Under Identity and Disclosure for example there is also reporting of reactions on the diagnosis!?

The reporting need to be in relation to the aim of the study.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to relevant standard for reporting and data deposition?

It is ok but could be improved by adding subheadings in the Methods section such as Design, study population, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations.

And also to make the changes proposed above.

Table 2 – Can you use % in the column of total as concerns Age?
Strange to have decimals when talking about age.

Figures either do not reach 100% or is above 100%!? With these small numbers I think it would be better to just give numbers and no percentages.
Missing data would be better to report directly in the table.

Appendix 1

Number 9 – “Summarize the general themes of the focus group and ask:” has this really been used for the interviews? Realistic interview question?

5. Are the discussion and conclusion well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Why isn’t the authors discussing their findings in relation to previous studies that have been summarised in the background and on which the study is based?

I do lack a connection to Charmaz “good days and bad days..” as well as to literature by Koch et al and Hjelm et al. See further above under 1.

On page 10, last sentence in paragraph 2 “Given that women appear to rely on a wider net work….” On what is that statement built? Literature?

The conclusion is strange as it just focuses on SMBG, are there not a lot of other important differences that need to be told about? Strange focus in conclusion.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Not in its present form.

There is a mix of focus-group interviews and individual telephone interviews, what impact has that? Connect to the methodological literature.

Sampling strategy? Bias? Influence of mixed ethnic origin?

Matters of trustworthiness, rigour?

Influence of the use of framework?

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Please see above under 1, 2, 5 and 6. Important is to connect the literature to the aim and to use methodological literature that is presenting the methods used/chosen.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Title ok.

Abstract – the purpose need to be the same as in the study.

Sentence starting with “Thematic analysis was used …”— is incomplete and need to be changed.

Please add number of respondents and their age range.

9. Is the writing acceptable.

Yes, language is good!
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

There are no competing interest to declare.