Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers and facilitating factors for disease self-management: a qualitative analysis of perceptions of patients’ receiving care for type 2 diabetes and/or hypertension in San Jose, Costa Rica and Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico

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Reviewer: Chima Ndumele

Reviewer’s report:

The authors present findings from a series of focus groups in Mexico and Costa Rica designed to obtain information about the perceived role in disease management for individuals with hypertension and diabetes. The authors find that there is a wide variation among participants in their readiness to accept their conditions and make recommended lifestyle changes. While the study explores a worthwhile topic and the studies were rigorously conducted, I remain concerned about the methodology used in the analysis and the clarity of the manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors use the stages of change framework to guide their analysis and place representative quotes from the focus group discussions (FGD) into each stage, however, the relative frequency with which the stages were discussed during FGDs remains unclear. Did the each stage reach a level of “saturation”? Would these quotes qualify as being representative of themes that were mentioned consistently? The authors should provide additional information regarding how the reader should conclude that the stages are a useful framework for classifying these FGDs.

In the manuscript the authors suggest that they analyzed transcripts from the two sites separately, however, but provide a very limited discussion of the similarities and differences between sites? Moreover, the focus groups were conducted in two settings with some similarities but notable differences as well (prevalence rates of the conditions). The authors should provide some rationale for why the findings from FGD held in these settings should be combined?

There is no discussion of whether the cities chosen are designed to be representative of primary care access in low- and middle income countries and whether the FG participants are representative of hypertensive and diabetic patients in these areas/clinics?

Do the authors have demographic comparisons of the individuals who participated and declined to participate in the FG? In San Jose, only 22 of the 38 selected adults actually participated in the groups, were these two groups systematically different?

The authors fail to mention the selection criteria for the individuals who were recruited to their study? This could provide some clarity surrounding the target population for the study.
Minor Essential Revisions

The initial paragraph of the manuscript describes the morbidity and mortality associated with chronic conditions in the developing world. However, the authors never introduce nor tailor this discussion to hypertension and diabetes, the conditions of interest for these studies. The authors may consider and introduction more relevant to these specific conditions.

Several areas in the background section deserve a citation. Including, but not limited to the statements which begin with “However, primary health care providers” (para 2), “likewise, patients may have difficulty communicating” (para 3), and “there are mixed results about the extent” (para 6).

Discretionary Revisions

The authors mention the primary mechanism for recruitment as referral from providers, but later discuss individuals recruited through flyers. The authors may consider mentioning all recruitment methods used.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests