Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding of an evidence based consumer information on fall prevention in old age: a focus group study

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Reviewer: Bernadette Dierckx de Casterlé

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REVIEW
Understanding of an evidence based consumer information on fall prevention in old age: a focus group study

General evaluation
The article addresses a relevant issue using an appropriate and creative approach. The importance of the acceptance and comprehensibility of brochures cannot be sufficiently underscored. The choice for a focus group methodology is interesting as this approach not only can learn us what participants think but also why they think this way. The results of the study indeed give some insights in the views of the respondents (do they agree or not? Do they understand or not), but they do not or hardly describe how and why they think so, why they evaluate the brochure positive rather negative. The focus on numbers (of respondents and groups) expressing an idea or message, gives a quantitative picture rather than a subtle or thoughtful insight to the respondents’ view. In other words, the reader expects a ‘thick’ description of the acceptance and comprehensibility of the brochure from the perspective of the seniors while the results are limited to brief evaluations of numbers of participants and focus groups. Consequently, the discussion is rather limited.

More in detail
Background
• The background describes the problem and its relevance clearly, but shortly. Some more information could add to the focusing of the problem. For example, the problem statement could be clarified by more information about the principles of risk communication and plain language and about the criteria of EBPI as both are issues of importance in the present study.
• “Disease awareness campaigns trigger consumers’ attitudes and opinions toward the necessity of treatment and prevention .... The consequences are well documented.” Which consequences????
• Bunge, 2010 is missing in the list of references

Development and description
• A more detailed description of the (development of the) brochure and its underlying principles could help the reader to better understand the results and
conclusions.

Methods

• The researchers asked the gatekeepers to explicitly consider different social classes when selecting eligible seniors. How did they do this concretely?

• Data collection: open questions were used, but we do not find a description of the answers on the open questions … the results mainly describe how many respondents express the same idea. Where are the ‘themes’ described. It could help the reader if the authors describe the different steps in more detail.

• Regarding the ethical considerations: what has been done to guaranty the anonymity of the respondents?

Results

• Overall acceptance: the conclusion that the participants, in general, appreciated the brochure has not a solid basis. The study did not produce convincing numbers nor detailed information or descriptions.

• Participants approved the length of the brochure (6/5): does this mean that 6 respondents (of the 30) coming from 5 different focus groups approved the length of the brochure? Without approval of the other participants? What is the value/meaning of this result?

• Simply presenting isolated quotations (rather than talk between participants) does not add value to the results (see also Kitzinger, 1995).

• Most results are interesting, but do not explain why the senior are thinking or evaluating in the way the results are telling.

• Influence of the educational background: which statistics did the researchers use to analyze the correlations?

The relevancy of the subject makes it worthwhile to thoroughly revise the paper.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'