Reviewer's report

Title: Perception of quality of care among residents of public nursing-homes in Spain: a grounded theory study

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Reviewer: Vivianne Baur

Reviewer's report:

Review comments on 'Perception of quality of care among residents of public nursing homes in Spain: a grounded theory study'.

The authors of this article want to investigate what quality of care means to residents of nursing homes, including both residents with and without cognitive impairments by qualitative research methods. This is a well defined, important and original question. The authors describe in a sound and detailed way how they collected data and how this was analyzed. The research methods are appropriate and well described with sufficient details on the sampling method, analysis of data etc. The criteria of data triangulation, inter-rater reliability and transparency are in place. I think the article is written in a clear style with a logical structure. Readers gain an insight in the experiences and perspectives of residents of nursing homes, which is a very needed and valuable endeavor of researchers that can only be promoted. My advice on this article is that it should be accepted after minor revisions.

I will present the points concerning which I think these minor revisions are needed.

1) On p.5 it is stated that the authors only know of two studies in which the voice of residents is incorporated as to clarify what is good and bad quality of care in nursing homes. I reckon they are right that there has been little attention for the voice of residents, but there must be more than two articles in which the voice of residents is included. I present these references that might be helpful for the authors:

2) The ethical considerations are taken into account by informed consent. I think this is important indeed. However, what I miss here is a critical consideration of the use of proxies for presenting the views of people with cognitive impairments. Here, in the ethical considerations section, or in the paragraph on the limitations
of the study, the authors should reflect on this important issue of representation.

3) Also an issue for ethical consideration or discussion of the limitations of the study concerns the extent to which the residents could feel free and safe to express critical views on the topic. The authors describe that residents were less critical and adopted a more conformist view (p. 14). However, several studies have shown that residents in long-term care are often reluctant or fearful to speak out about negative experiences, show gratitude and have low expectations. See also:


4) On p.10 the authors state that differences according to gender could be distinguished. Women speak of 'warmth and kindness' and men speak of 'friendliness'. It is unclear what difference the authors refer to, as kindliness and friendliness appear to have the same connotation and meaning. However, this could also be due to language differences and the translation process. It could be helpful for readers if the authors describe what different connotations they discovered, maybe even mentioning the exact Spanish words.

5) On p. 17 it is stated: 'Notwithstanding this (interpersonal and technical quality criteria prevail over structural aspects and outcome related aspects, in Spain, seems to be more feasible for institutions to include technical rather than interpersonal aspects in their quality assessments.' Why?

6) The authors state on p. 18 that proxy informants are influenced by the predominant cultural idea in the Mediterranean area that family members are the best care providers and that this is the reason why the nursing home is seen as a substitute in the provision of care to their family members. Furthermore, the authors conclude that, as a result, family members' concept of kind and considerate care includes a family-like relationship, based on closeness, person-centered care and respect for the resident's autonomy. I would like to question this uncritical cultural stereotyping. Also because in the next sentence it becomes clear that other studies (conducted in non-Mediterranean countries) show the same importance for family members concerning a 'homelike' atmosphere as the ideal care setting. The authors should reflect more critically on this issue.

7) Reading the article I came across some grammatical and/or typing errors:

- Figure 1 reads 'techinical standards' instead of 'technical'
- p. 5 'Moreover, no study has included proxies’ residents with cognitive impairment in its sample'
- p.6 'The study sample comes from a nursing home where live 180 assisted and unassisted older people.'

- p. 6/7 'As informants, we included persons aged over 65 years, with permanent resident status and a minimum length of stay of three months at the nursing home in question, necessary time we estimated to know about the facilities, services and staff.'

- p.17 '3) the participants’ perceptions of quality care are highly influenced by predominant cultural idea about ideal care for older people; and 4) conceptualizations of nursing home are different for residents that for resident’s family members.

- p.17 'Professionals' points of view also emphasize tangible aspects (physical needs) over low tech and familiar treatment'

- p.19 'Other studies have also underscored the importance that for clients has the early care when they have a problem'

- p.19 'Relatives' perceptions tend to resemble to those clients of private health services'

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests