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: Anna Renom Guiteras

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript "Perception of quality of care among residents of public nursing-homes in Spain: a grounded theory study". Quality of care in long-term care settings is indeed a topic of interest and a better understanding of the perceptions of the residents is needed. The question posed by the authors is well defined. However, I have found some shortcomings in the manuscript, which I report below:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Methods:
Grounded theory seems an appropriate method for the authors' research question. However, I have three main methodological concerns:

1- The authors address the readers to the methods section of another study published by their own working group (Preconceptions about institutionalisation at public nursing homes in Spain: views of residents and family members). Apparently, the same in-depth interviews were used for the two studies, although they dealt with two different research questions. The "interview topics list" of the published article differs from the list in the present manuscript. Some aspects should be clarified and transparently reported at the manuscript with regard to this: Did the authors plan to study both topics ("Preconceptions about institutionalisation" and "Perception of quality of care") from the beginning within the same interviews? How did they develop the interview topics list? Or was the present study a secondary analysis of the published study? In this case, did you ask the participants to give their informed consent for secondary data analysis?

2- Regarding the sampling method, the authors report that theoretical sampling was used in order to ensure the inclusion of informants of both sexes, different age groups and socio-demographical characteristics. However, this description fits better a purposive sampling method, rather than theoretical sampling, in which the selection of new participants should be based on the results of the ongoing data analysis (e.g. aspects/areas detected to have not yet been explored). If this is indeed what was done, I would recommend the authors to better describe it.

3- At the section "results" the authors report that "in the analysis of interview content relative importance was measured by frequency of appearance in the text". Commonly, frequency of appearance is not the main factor considered
when analysing data within this method.

Results:
In general, the results are given in a too superficial way, without making the reader understand why and how the proposed categories emerged:
- The two main categories should be better defined or described. Which underlying concepts made the researchers distinguish between these categories?
- The two categories under "kind and considerate care", a) and b), are not clear. Why did the researchers choose them? What is the concept behind? This should be explained, since the participants probably did not use the terms "professional attitudes" or "professional skills".
- It is not clear why the researchers classified each of the components under these categories (a) and b)). For example, why is "good manners and respect" included under b) (professional skills) and not under a) (professional attitudes)?
- Some of the components proposed seem very similar to each other (e.g. kindness and friendliness). It should be made more clear which underlying concept is behind each of them, or otherwise they should be put together under the same concept or group (e.g. emotional area?).

The terms used are often too interpretative, while it would be better to stick as much as possible to the participants' statements. For example, the component "person-centred care" is proposed, which is too interpretative and far away to what the participant really said. Another example "effective communication" (it might be better to choose a term which is more near to what the participants said or, at least to explain what is meant with "effective communication" and why you chose this term).

It is not clear why some of the terms have been included at Figure 1 while some others have not. For example, why does Figure 1 contain "Cheerfulness" and does not contain "family-like care" or "anonymity" or "job stability among professional staff" or "cleanliness" or "recreational activities"? Are some of them more important or consistent? I would suggest that the authors explain this. Maybe a table would be more helpful than a figure.

In summary, the "results" section lacks of structure and description of the underlying concepts behind each of the terms used, in order to explain why each term has been selected and classified there.

Discussion:
Four theories are reported to have emerged from this study. This reviewer could not understand how theories 2, 3 and 4 were developed, as they do not seem to be directly related to the results of the study.

The discussion section has some interesting discussion points but is rather superficial. For example, in the third paragraph the authors mention a number or attitudes and skills from other studies. However, no deeper analysis of the similarities or differences between the concepts behind has been done.
Language check:
Although I am not a native English speaker, I think the manuscript needs a language check. Examples:
- At "introduction": ...perspectives of the nursing home residents'. (no apostrophe)
- At "methods": "The study sample comes from a nursing home where live 180 assisted and unassisted older people" ("live" at the end of the sentence).

Minor Essential Revisions

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In the section "data collection" it is not clear if all the topics of the list (Table 3) were discussed or only if they arose during the interview.
At the section "ethical considerations" the name of the Ethics Committee should be mentioned.
At the section "rigour", the authors provide good arguments justifying the credibility of their methods. However, the concept of triangulation seems not to be well employed in this context.
At the section "data analysis" the disciplines of the researchers performing data analysis should be mentioned.

Writing and language check
I could not fully understand the terms:
- At "abstract": "delivery quality": are the authors speaking about the quality of the care delivered?
- At "abstract": "technical standards of delivery quality": do the authors mean "quality standards of care"?
The writing style is rather redundant and sentences are sometimes too long. More direct and concise sentences might be preferred. E.g.:
- At the "introduction" section, the text contains three paragraphs explaining (in different ways) the idea that perspectives of the residents have been rarely taken into account, while the views of the professionals and family members have been more often considered. Similar references are provided. This sounds redundant and I'd suggest to try to synthesise this information in one or two paragraphs.
- At the "methods" section, it is mentioned twice that interviewees gave their consent, this could be simplified.
Two different terms have been used for indicating the same concept: cognitive deterioration and cognitive impairment. This could be homogenised.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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