Reviewer’s report

Title: Shifting between governing or being governed: a qualitative study of older persons self-determination

Version: 2 Date: 12 July 2014

Reviewer: Paulette Hunter

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. I appreciated the concise and well-structured presentation of methods and results, the collaborative approach to analysis adopted by the authors, and the topic, which has significance as the number of frail older adults continues to increase globally.

Discretionary revisions:
1. In line 110, do you mean to say “new codes” rather than new data?
2. Ensure that you have provided a thorough introduction by identifying other studies on self-determination if possible.

Major compulsory revisions:
3. There are limitations in the writing that should be addressed, although the document reads very well in many places. Given the number of these limitations in the abstract and the full paper, I recommend having the paper professionally edited. I found mistakes on lines 2, 3, 7, 57, 112, 160, 163, 215, 219, 232. There were several other lines in which the phrasing was unusual or ambiguous, but I have not listed these. In addition, there were some lines that didn’t seem to belong in the paper at all, such as line 121-122 and 281-300. Overall, some things to consider are the attribution of agency to non-agents such as studies, comma placement, missing words, other typos and ambiguous statements. Organization and argument were issues in lines 44-51 and in the discussion; otherwise, the paper was generally organized very well.
4. Expand and reorganize lines 44-51 to make a more cogent argument for the relevance of frailty to your topic.
5. Remove evaluation of own paper from discussion (e.g., line 281-300). This would be more appropriate in a paper illustrating the method rather than in a paper presenting new results.
6. You note that guarding one’s independence is “also” associated with the desire not to be a burden. Please further justify this. Wishing not to be a burden and self-determination seem like different, though related, ideas.
7. Line 252 (“which together probably... tiring”) does not seem to be a data-driven interpretation and should be removed.
8. The results are presented very well, so you can and should provide a more concise summary in the discussion (i.e., to replace the first two paragraphs).

9. Spend more time discussing the relevance of your results. This is currently the most significant limitation of the paper. Only one paragraph is devoted to this sort of discussion (262-280).

**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.