Reviewer's report

Title: Fighting for control in an unpredictable life - a qualitative study of older persons' experiences of living with chronic dizziness.

Version: 2 Date: 16 May 2014

Reviewer: Christine Wann-Hansson

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Comments to the author

This paper addresses an important issue and provides interesting information about what it means to live with chronic dizziness as an older person. Such information must be of great interest for all health care professionals who are working with older persons as it increase our understanding about these person's needs. The paper is generally well written and I appreciated the reading however some clarifications are needed.

Here are some of the issues I would like to see addressed prior to publication:

I missed some information about potential other diseases among the participants that can affect daily life such as arthritis, cardiovascular diseases etc. Many older persons have several comorbidities that interplay and it can be hard to value what ailment that affects daily life most. (Major compulsory revision)

Were all participants independent of help (eight were living alone) and was this an inclusion criteria? This may be important since one of the subcategories reflects insufficient support and another a struggling to maintain ordinary life and the meaning of independence is discussed. (Major compulsory revision)

Can you please explain the abbreviation ENT on page 8 (Minor essential revision)

Why were the first interview performed by both the first and the last authors? I miss the rational for doing this. Was it some kind of training session or a part of the pilot study? (Major compulsory revision)

How was the pilot study performed? How many interviews? And the interviews were performed with whom? (Major compulsory revision)

How was the analysis inspired of Graneheim and Lundman? What did you do different? You also refer to Berg (2004) and were the analysis inspired of Berg as well? (Major compulsory revision)

The different steps in the analysis process seem a little unclear. Firstly the interviews were read by the first author to get a general understanding and this understanding was confirmed by two co-authors. Did they also read all the interviews, identified meaning units and codes? I think it would be difficult to
confirm the content and sub-categorizing the two interviews otherwise. (Major compulsory revision)

In some aspect the content and meaning in the categories “Fumbling for a cure and improvements” and “To get insufficient support” are tangible and the authors should think about in what aspects these categories differ and make this clearer. Also in the discussion section starting in the end on page 18 these categories are discussed together. (Major compulsory revision)

Some of the quotations are quite long and to facilitate for the reader they could be shortened without losing meaning. For example the last one on page 20, line 11 on page 14 and the last one on page 16-17. (Discretionary revision)

The authors should rethink about how they describe trustworthiness since they are referring to Lincoln (ref nr 35). However, in my book “Naturalistic inquiry” (1985) there are two authors Yvonna S Lincoln and Egon G Guba. Aspects like variation in the sample and transparent descriptions here described ensure credibility may better explain aspects of transferability. There are further no information about the first author and her pre-understanding. My guess is that she is a physiotherapist with experience in treating people with chronic dizziness? (Major compulsory revision)

**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