Reviewer's report

Title: Effective Process or Dangerous Precipice: Comparative Embedded Case Study with Young People with Epilepsy and Their Parents during Transition from Children's to Adult services.

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Reviewer: John O Elliott

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This paper provides a very meaningful method for addressing the care gaps for transitioning youth with epilepsy.

I commend the authors for such a theoretical driven qualitative analysis of their data. The diagrams provide a wonderful conceptual framework for the presenting the theory behind the work as well as for providing a meaningful synthesis and analysis, all while being very transparent about the process. This is very important for qualitative research. It is very clear the authors put a lot of time and effort in planning, conducting and summarizing the study.

I have a few comments that I feel work help strengthen the manuscript.

It is clear there is a communication problem in terms of the interaction between the physicians and the young persons with epilepsy (and their parents). This is such a monumental problem that never seems to get addressed in the educational process (medical school, residency, fellowship, etc) or in the policies and procedures of healthcare organizations. The literature on this problem (health literacy) is extensive and not represented in the paper. In the US with the push towards cost containment and “quality care” will hopefully push towards more system change. This problem is however global.

The authors include self-esteem in their models. I would encourage them to rethink this as there is extensive research that self-esteem is a USELESS construct that is essentially WORTHLESS to measure. The best review of this is by Baumeister et al titled: “DOES HIGH SELF-ESTEEM CAUSE BETTER PERFORMANCE, INTERPERSONAL SUCCESS, HAPPINESS, OR HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES?” In the journal Psychological Science in the Public Interest.

A much more meaningful construct would be self-compassion which has been well studied by Kristen Neff. I would recommend a paper called “Self-Compassion: An Alternative Conceptualization of a Healthy Attitude Toward Oneself in the journal Self and Identity”. Read this works and her follow up work. I sincerely think it change your view of the struggles that not only PWE experience but of life in general. Self-compassion and mindfulness are truly a prescription for a better society.

In terms of the discussion and conceptual models the other missing piece is the integration of the social piece of the puzzle. They mention the biological and
psychological however a biopsychosocial approach is needed for PWE. This leads to a vital need for the integration of social workers and psychologists into epilepsy care - no offense to nursing and medicine, but social workers/psychologists have much more expertise and training in human behavior and behavioral change. The professional organizations that “certify” comprehensive epilepsy centers call for this as do many published professional committee guidelines. Youth PWE and families would benefit tremendously from family therapy as well as mindfulness based approaches to psychological therapy earlier in the disease diagnosis/treatment process. Traditional medically provided education by physicians and nurses is not enough.

The transition from children’s to adult care also ruptures the therapeutic relationship. It might help to incorporate this into the paper. Also is there literature of transitional care in other chronic diseases in children (say diabetes). One could argue that the transition from childhood to adulthood is difficult no matter if the child has a chronic condition or not. Also young adults perceive risk differently (smoking, wearing helmets, driving). This process of differentiating from parents is important. This point is driven home especially when you see adult PWE in their 40s and 50s coming to appointments with their aging parents. It’s not healthy when parents shelter their children to the point that they don’t go through adolescence they way other people do.

**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:**

No conflict of interest in any or all of the above