Reviewer's report

Title: What do bereaved parents want from professionals after the sudden death of their child? A structured narrative review of the literature.

Version: 2 Date: 3 July 2014

Reviewer: Rebecca Rudd

Reviewer's report:

This proved to be a very interesting and comprehensive overview of the current literature on support needs for bereaved parents. This field of parental bereavement is in need of a thorough assessment of previous work. Additionally, the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative reviews added an additional depth to the information gathered. While the concept behind this article has tremendous benefit to the field, the methods used for synthesizing the data were not well-described. The results section could be strengthened by providing the statistics from the specific studies. As a reader, I was very interested in how different the studies were etc. With the author's well-known published history on this topic, it would be a benefit to this article to provide more discussion about how, where and when these needs can be used and by whom – assuming your readers are professionals – perhaps concluding with a chart of some kind.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Line 71 the authors noted “professionals” but it was unclear to the reader who/what professions were being discussed.

2) Line 96 & 97: The exclusion criteria provided more clarity for the reader; however, the inclusion criteria were lacking and impacted the reader’s understanding of the results. While reading the results and discussion section it was difficult to determine who or what death types these recommendations applied to (i.e., SIDS versus suicide). Furthermore, circumstances surrounding the differences between unexpected deaths are vast and may impact the type of support needed. Moreover, it was unclear from the inclusion criteria what typical professional support was encountered by this population.

3) Line 114. The “data extraction process” was not well-defined. Adding another sentence or two about how this occurred would prove valuable to your article.

4) Line 121. While the authors took special care to note attempts to avoid bias in the results, it would be difficult to generalize the results of this literature review to all unexpected deaths of a child due to the vast differences and experiences (i.e., homicide versus poisoning).

5) Line 122. The rationale for the use of “reference papers” by Finlay and Dallimore and Dent et al, was not well outlined. It was stated in the article that these reference papers were chosen since they covered the most types of sudden deaths and were thought to be the most comprehensive. It appeared that the author’s literature review then detailed how qualitative or quantitative studies
confirmed or corroborated these results. This method appeared to limit the possibility for new qualitative themes thereby minimizing the power of the comprehensive qualitative and quantitative literature review. Perhaps a meta-analysis would be a stronger more fruitful method for answering the research question.

6) Line 122. The “reference papers” were mentioned several times, but the authors should assume the reader is unfamiliar with the content of these papers and need further explanation if they are to be used in this context.

Minor Essential Revisions
1) Line 70-72: This sentence should be reworked for clarity.

Discretionary Revisions
None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests