Reviewer's report

Title: Life impact of ankle fractures: Qualitative analysis of patient and clinician experiences

Version: 2 Date: 11 April 2012

Reviewer: Francesc Medina-Mirapeix

Reviewer's report:

REVIEWER’S REPORT:
Thank you for the opportunity to review this report. This work is interesting study and the results are of potential interest to understand individuals with ankle fractures.

All suggestions below are major compulsory revisions

Introduction
This section does not flow well. The objective and significance of this study for audiences are well described; however it would benefit the reader first to identify clearly the research problem leading to the study and second to include studies addressing the problem and deficiencies in past literature.

In addition, references need to be included for some sentences (eg. “No randomized trials comparing …”).

Method
The results will depend on the rigour of the methods and their explicit presentation. The methods are not well described. Thus, sometimes it is difficult to assess its appropriateness. I recommend you to include specifically suggestions of BMC qualitative research review guidelines-RAT.

Sampling
Criteria for selecting the study sample of patients are explicit, but the authors used quantitative terminology for sampling (consecutive). In my opinion, this term should be changed by a purposive sampling.

The authors used an appropriated sampling strategy for patients but not for sites. Only one centre was selected and this is the fundamental weakness of this study.

Recruitment
The authors should include more details of how recruitment was conducted and by whom. The process of how potential participants were approached, received study information and gave consent needs to be described.

Data collection
The end of data collection was enough described and justified. However, the setting and patient population included in this study need to be much more clearly defined.
Ethics
There should be a sentence about how and when Informed Consent was obtained (in recruitment phase, just before data collection ...). It also should be described how data storage and confidentiality was ensured (code number for data entry, pseudonym for the pooled transcripts).

Analysis
The analysis described is enough justified. Perhaps, it would benefit the reader to understand more regarding how dependability/reliability was checked.

Results
Layout of results is basically acceptable. Nevertheless, it would benefit readers if to know characteristics of patients and professionals who support quotes. A table with the characteristics of the participants would have been helpful. For example, participants 1-12 on the vertical axis with columns covering age, gender, and length of stay ... Then quotes could be matched by participant number.

It is also unclear who the professionals are that are mentioned throughout the results section. Because several groups of professional participated as subjects of this study, the authors should specific about who the groups of professionals.

Finally, in my opinion, perhaps the theme “Financial impact” could be include as an specific aspect or consequence of theme “Occupational or domestic”. Nevertheless, it is only one opinion, not a suggestion for changing.

Discussion
The discussion is good and will be more relevant when the introduction and methods are expanded and improved, and when some of the results are integrated in this section.

Abstract
This is a reasonable summary of the paper. However, authors could include some changes after the manuscript has been amended so that methods and results are summarised in line with the document.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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