Reviewer’s report

Title: Self-care coping strategies in people with diabetes: a qualitative exploratory study

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Reviewer: James Fitzgerald

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This manuscript presents the results of a study concerning the different coping mechanisms used by people with diabetes. A targeted sampling strategy was used to select 17 individuals for in-depth interviews regarding their diabetes and self-care behavior. Qualitative analyses indicated these individuals could generally be characterized (using their coping mechanism) as one of three types of patients: the reactive manager patient, the passive follower patient, or the nonconformist patient.

Background

1st Paragraph, 4th Sentence: I would not characterize the provider’s role in diabetes care as “a small one” even relative to the patient’s role. Certainly the provider is not in the traditional acute care role, he/she is more of a consultant or educator.

Last Paragraph, 1st Sentence: I don’t believe there is a “dearth of information” on the burden of diabetes and patient coping mechanisms. I think this study adds to the literature, but there are other studies that focus on this topic.

The aim of the study was clearly stated in the last sentence of the Background section.

Methods

In the maximum variation sample, the selection strategy should be clearly stated rather than implied in Table 1. For example, we targeted 50% women, 50% type 2 diabetes, 3 persons with duration of 5 years or less, etc.

Data analysis

Who listened and coded these interviews? Did all four authors?

What is Annotape software? I went to the site provided (http://www.annotape.com/) and found a business supply company’s site.

Data credibility

This section is vague about the data’s credibility, “The review broadly corroborated the lead researcher’s findings”. I am uncertain how to interpret this comment and the subsequently results.

Results
I understand the authors’ use of the term “ideal” to describe their patient types, however, I must say it was distracting and suggests a connotation that is evaluative rather than descriptive. I am not certain that it necessary. Otherwise, the descriptions of the 3 types patient are well written and informative. The associated tables (2-4) are clear and enlightening as is Figure 1.

Discussion

1st Paragraph, 2nd Sentence: Need to rewrite this sentence. Suggest, “Previous studies indicate that patients believe the benefits of treatment outweigh the barriers encountered.”

The Discussion section was difficult for me to follow and I wasn’t certain what the authors were trying to convey. They introduce 3 health behavior theories and then attempt to explain how their 3 patient coping types fit these theories. I would suggest that the authors present their coping categories and use the theories to explain and better understand the patient behaviors described by each type.

Some additional minor points, I suggest the comments regarding the “ideal type” as an analytical construct come when the term is first introduced. Also, the manuscript’s Introduction should include some paragraphs about the behavioral theories found in the Discussion section and how they will be used in the paper. Finally, in the paragraphs about the study’s limitations, I am not certain what the authors meant by the sentence that begins “However, it should be noted that the …” or what should have been probed further. These limitation items need to be clarified.

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.