Reviewer's report

Title: Modelling the landscape of palliative care for people with dementia: a European mixed methods study

Version: 1 Date: 14 May 2013

Reviewer: Katherine Froggatt

Reviewer's report:

This is a well structured and written paper that describes a mixed methods study undertaken to develop a generic model of palliative care for people with dementia. This is an important study that addresses an increasingly important issue internationally. A review of peer-reviewed literature and policy publications is undertaken to inform interviews with a range of experts working with people with dementia. It provides a comprehensive synthesis of the different dimensions shaping palliative care provision for this population.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. State author contributions for L Radbruch and DF Haugen
2. Background - 3rd paragraph, sentence 5. Track changes marks still present
3. Methods – Delete “of” from sentence: “The objectives were:”
5. Findings and Outputs – last paragraph, omit extra space before “;”
6. Section labelled Conclusion to be relabelled Discussion or change “discussion” to “conclusions” in last sentence of Findings and Outputs section
7. Conclusion, Managing Risk and Complexity, paragraph 4 - change “&” to “and”.
8. Conclusion, Structure & function of care planning - change “&” to “and”.
9. Conclusion, Structure & function of care planning. 2nd paragraph - change “&” to “and” in McCarthy & Addington-Hall.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Background – I think it might be helpful to review your use of the terms palliative care and end-of-life care and provide definitions earlier in the background section than you currently do. In the Conclusion, Boundaries section you explicitly acknowledge different stages re palliative and end-of-life care it would be helpful to have these more clearly explicated earlier. I am also not clear why the term end-of-life care is used in Figure 4, rather than palliative care.
2. Figure 4 – the term ‘good death’ is used, without any discussion as to what this means in the text – this needs clarifying or editing in Figure 4.
3. Methods - Given the outcome is a model that puts the person with dementia at the centre, it would be interesting to know how the direct experiences of people with dementia were incorporated into the study, or were they only represented by others?

4. Methods – clarify methods used for the narrative review of policy publications

5. Findings and Outputs – Clarify assumption 1)” Most diagnoses are made by specialists” – is this diagnoses of dementia or a diagnosis of palliative care need.

6. Findings and Outputs – Clarify assumption 5)”Bereavement may begin before death occurs” – is this for family members and or staff?

7. Consider use of a more generic term for care homes for an international audience, such as long-term care facilities. Care homes is a UK specific term.

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