Reviewer's report

Title: 'Palliative care': a contradiction in terms? A qualitative study among cancer patients with a Turkish or Moroccan background, their relatives and care providers

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Reviewer: Alex Molassiotis

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Review comments for authors:

This is an interesting paper about the concept of good palliative care in Turkish and Moroccan patients and comparing their views with those of Dutch health professionals. Some reference is made in the (brief) Background about other studies with Dutch Turkish and Moroccan patients, and a little more detail would be useful to put this study in a stronger context with the literature. Also, what is missing is a much stronger justification why patients from a Turkish and Moroccan background have been chosen for this study (ie. Is it because these are the two largest immigrant groups in Holland, or something else?).

I was a bit lost with the interview numbers. P.2 mentions 65 interviews held, but 33 with patients; needs clarifying that the remaining were with health professionals (if they were), so some more clear breakdown and detail on sample. Also, it states that 33 interviews were held with patients, but the next paragraph states that in 6 of the 33 cases researchers were able to speak to the patient in person, which conflicts with earlier sentence. If only 6 patients were interviewed, what happened with the other 27? I suspect you interviewed family members, but then you say that 30 family members were interviewed and 47 with health professionals. I am pretty lost with the numbers. What I suggest is to have 3 sections describing clearly your population, one for patients, one for family members and one for health professionals. Some more info on the type of family caregiver is appropriate too (ie. daughter, mother etc). There is reference in Table 1 to 40 alive patients and 29 dead, again these numbers don't add up based on what you said in the text, unless I have missed something.

A more detailed interview guide is needed.

What theoretical framework have you used or drew upon to develop this study. Same for methodological framework. There needs to be more detail regarding these fundamental aspects of the study. The same goes for the analysis, where more clarity and detail is needed.

What were the procedures for the study (step-by-step description of who did what when and how).

An 'inventory of concrete decisions and actions' is mentioned, but I was not sure how this was done (and why), and what was its role in this study.

The theme of 'good care' is discussed here, but a brief description of the overall
themes of the study would also be enhancing the clarity of the study and putting this theme in context with the broader findings.

The word 'differ' in the results should be avoided, as it is quite a quantitative term.

Researchers found that a significant number of patients were not aware of their diagnosis and terminal care nature, but this is left with little discussion. There are quite a few papers dealing with this in the literature (not just Turkish and Moroccan) and the implications of this for the patient and care provided could be highlighted in the discussion a bit more.

9 pages of results are presented, with many subthemes, both in patients/family and health professionals. It would be good to pull all these subthemes together, perhaps using a diagram, so at the end we make more sense of what the essence of the findings are about.

Discussion: very limited, and a disappointing section in this paper. There is no 'take home' message either. Little placing of the findings in context with cultural care too, limited implications for practice and research.

Overall, some good data there, but the authors have failed to provide the 'so what' answer. I believe the results are useful and will contribute to our understanding of a cultural context of 'good palliative care', but the way presented is disappointing and uninformative. Some more thinking needs to go about how these results can contribute to new knowledge and how to present and discuss these (very useful otherwise) results.