Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient and health professional views on rehabilitation practices and outcomes following total hip and knee arthroplasty for osteoarthritis: a focus group study

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Reviewer: Inger Holmstrom

Reviewer’s report:

1. Overall comments:
This paper examines attitudes and issues on current practices and outcomes of hip or knee replacement among key stakeholders. This is an interesting and important topic for both practitioners’ and researchers, and fits sufficiently into the aims and scope of BMC Health Services Research. However, the paper is a bit lengthy and the result section needs reorganisation to make it easier to grasp. Also the reference list is far too long. The language used is easy to read and follow.

2. Title, abstract and key-words
The title is descriptive and well chosen. In the abstract result section, the first 3 sentences describing the study population should be moved to the method section, since this is a qualitative study. The conclusion could be clearer about in what way the patients’ views differed from health professionals’. Keywords?

3. Introduction and literature-review
Given the length of the manuscript the introduction is rather brief. In this section I would like to see a short description of how the US and the Canadian health system differ, to set the context of the study and make the results more interesting for international readers. I would also like to see some comparison with rehabilitation after other longstanding illnesses demanding elective surgery. Furthermore, the 2 paragraphs staring with “Focus groups…” (before the purpose) should be moved to the method section.

4. Methods
I would personally like to start the result section with “sampling”, then “participation selection criteria”. The sampling is a weak part of the study (volunteer, convenience and snowball sampling) and the authors need to argue for their choice of sampling techniques. However, sampling and data collection are well described, and the interview guide is an appendix. If the authors consider this to be a qualitative content analysis, they should state that. Or is it a generic qualitative analysis? Or maybe grounded theory? It is not obvious to me. I would like to see examples of coding. This can be done including a table.

5. Results
The results are interesting, and they are well illustrated by quotes. However, the result section is not easy to follow. The first part of the result section “Eleven focus groups …” which is describing the sample should be moved to the method section. Instead the results should start by stating the key themes and their subthemes. Comparisons between groups could be described after that. It is unclear to me how the subthemes relate to each other, and a figure could provide much help. Remove the voluminous tables 3, 4 (table 4 occur twice!) and 6. Make clear which themes and subthemes that overlaps between groups, and which do not.

6. Discussion and conclusions
The discussion section is adequate. On p. 29 the sentences describing “unacceptably high levels of post-operative pain…” to ref [48] could be included in the introduction. If you discuss the findings from a theoretical framework, it would strengthen the study (for instance, patient empowerment theories or coping theories). Strengths and weaknesses of the study are well discussed. Clinical implications are great.

**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'