Reviewer's report

Title: Cross-Sectional Research into Counselling for Non-Medical Rational Suicide: Who asks for it and what happens?

Version: 3
Date: 11 August 2014

Reviewer: Jemma Regan

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11.08.2014
Dr Jemma Regan's report of:
Cross-Sectional Research into Counselling for Non-Medical Rational Suicide: Who asks for it and what happens?
Overall, a very interesting area of research written in a clear format. There are some sections for improvement. The general language and grammatical usage requires a lot of work throughout the document for it to read at a scientifically acceptable level.

I recommend the following minor essential changes to the work:

When assessing the work, please consider the following points:
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes, the research question is clear and contextualised.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Further details regarding the questions asked would be helpful. The questionnaire / extra questions added to the measurement instrument for the study should be in the appendices.
3. Are the data sound?
Yes, but this should be checked by a statistician
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Overall, yes but the recommendations from the paper could be more clearly stated.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The 'strengths and shortcomings' section was the weakest area of the report. Further details are required across all three points made in this section. The first point about it being the first quantitative research in the field requires contextualising and references to recent previous work. The second point about
generalisation requires clarification and further detail. The third point regard client and counsellor dialogue also requires clarification and empirical support.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The title is clear. The abstract is unclear in parts, as a result of unclear writing (see next point)

9. Is the writing acceptable?
I feel the standard of English language in this paper requires work throughout, mostly for grammatical errors, lack of comma usage and some of the sentence structures are too long and / or unclear to the reader.

Unclear sentences requiring re-writing/clarification:

a. Abstract Results section last sentence: ‘The former group…..for life’s end’
b. Background: use of ‘request their physician’ is unclear use of English
c. Background: “…1.25% of all annual deaths concern suicide” – concern should be substituted for another word.
d. Sources of underlying suffering section: use of “presence” is unclear, does this mean ‘present’?
e. Outcome of the Counselling process: ‘because the client mentioned to contact the counsellor” is unclear – ‘mentioned’?
f. “on hold” – at this point in double quotation marks and later on in single marks.
g. DISCUSSION title – spelling error
h. Looking for a peaceful death section: “diseases mentioned often with clients with a severe disease” is unclear
i. “..thinking nor being able…” is too colloquial
j. Implications section: “ Acknowledging……to prepare a NMRS” unclear sentence structure / word usage
k. “Hereby…have a chance to a conversation to talk openly….” Superfluous use of words, shorten sentence
l. The article is missing many commas which makes the reading of the paper unclear in many places. E.G. “In the Netherlands 1.25%” should have a comma added to read: “In the Netherlands, 1.25%” e.g. In the box Goal of foundation De Einder: “In the situation….to want to end life the counselling…” should read: “In the situation…..to want to end life, the counselling…”
m. Typo in measurements instrument section: “and to avoid bias everal” – should read “several”?
n. Use of “was” instead of “were” under Client characteristics section “Eleven per cent was” should read “were”.
o. Various places where additional / missing words e.g. BACKGROUND abstract
“request their physician for” / “that request for PAD”, “explicitly requested their physician for PAD”.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests