Reviewer’s report

Title: The emotional base of self-care in chronic illness: A qualitative study of the role of health professional support in the self-management of type 2 diabetes.

Version: 1 Date: 29 May 2008

Reviewer: debbie kralik

Reviewer’s report:

Article review


Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper which explores self management in the context of experience with Type 2 diabetes. The paper is well presented and easy to read.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The research question is well defined but the concepts of self management and self care have not been defined. These terms seem to be used interchangeably and this is not congruent with latest literature.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods section would benefit from more description. I was left with many questions.
• When was the study undertaken? (year and timeframe)
• How many focus groups were held? (ie. Did each group meet only once?)
• How were the groups organized and facilitated?
• What questions were asked?
• How long did the meetings last?
• Were men and women represented equally (ie. Koch and Kralik found gender differences in the way people incorporate diabetes into their lives)
• I could not find mention of ethical considerations… particularly when researching with non-english speaking people.
• What are the implications of translation on data? For example there are some Arabic words and concepts in do not translate into English.

3. Are the data sound?
The data is engaging and well presented. The verbatim comments from participants is congruent with the interpretations presented.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data
The data presented is a particular strength of this paper.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Little literature is drawn into the discussion which is disappointing given the large number of papers that have been published in recent years on self care and self management. I think the discussion would be strengthened by the existing literature.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

The lack of generalisability of the study is the only limitation stated. I would like to see evidence of more thought put into the limitations of the study.

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 Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Several of the authors are well known in the area of chronic illness research although surprisingly have not drawn on their own work.

Recommendations for further research in this area could be described.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Title and abstract accurately convey the focus and findings of the research being reported.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

The paper is easy to read and of a publishable standard once the following recommendations have been incorporated.

Major Compulsory Revisions
- The authors need to expand their description of method using the questions detailed in section 2.
- The discussion would be strengthened by incorporating the literature and building on current debates.
- Limitations of the study need to be articulated.
- Make recommendations for further research.

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 have no competing interests.