Reviewer’s report

Title: Emergency Medical Service Provider Decision-Making in Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest: An Exploratory Study

Version: 0 Date: 21 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Namita Jayaprakash

Reviewer’s report:

This qualitative study is described well in terms of the approach that the authors took to address their aim. The body of work is interesting as it gives a perspective from EMS providers regarding their approaches to out of hospital cardiac arrest. It also adds a layer of consideration to be applied to developing guidelines and protocols for out of hospital cardiac arrests and pre-hospital responses. The introduction is well written addressing the problem, the current knowledge, the knowledge gap and the aim of the study. The methods clearly describe the study design and approach. The figures are descriptive and easy to follow. The use of quotations from the focus groups helps the reader understand the qualitative analysis. The discussion provides a good summary of the study, places it in context of current available evidence, highlights limitations and describes how future work may be developed.

I would like to highlight a couple of things that the authors should address.

1. The conclusion of the abstract raises questions rather than concludes the work. The conclusion in the manuscript is much more applicable as a conclusion. The abstract could be strengthened if the conclusion was more applicable to the study rather than the approach that is taken with the following statement, ‘An improved understanding of the circumstantial, individual and interpersonal factors that mediate the decision-making process in clinical practice could inform the development of more effective clinical guidelines, education and clinical decision support in OHCA.’ (Page 2, lines 44 - 47). A revision would be appropriate.

2. Table 1 of the results section lays out the baseline characteristics. It is unclear what the relevance of marital status and parental status are in relation to the study as the authors do not explain that.

3. In table 1 the authors use the term 'training route' in row 5. The use of this terminology can be confusing to the reader that is not familiar with the UK. It may be more worthwhile to either explain the term or use an alternative and more generalizable phrase.

4. In table 1, the authors report the mean age and mean length of service. This implies a normal distribution and given that this was a voluntary group of participants and not a randomized sample I suspect that there was more of a skewed distribution. Therefore, reporting a median with an interquartile range would be more appropriate.
5. If the authors have data on the region that is covered by the focus group participants, that is rural versus urban, it would be an interesting addition to table 1.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
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I am able to assess the statistics

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Acceptable

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