Reviewer’s report

Title: Learning from older peoples' reasons for participating in demanding, intensive epidemiological studies: A qualitative study

Version: 0 Date: 16 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Milla Saajanaho

Reviewer’s report:

This qualitative study aims to explore the motivators and concerns of older people in participating in an intensive epidemiological study. The study aim is plausible, since it is a common struggle among researchers to recruit enough participants in gerontological / epidemiological studies and knowledge on the motivators of older people to participate in such studies might help researchers in their recruitment efforts and lead to higher participation rates and thus to increased representability of studies. The manuscript is well written, scientifically sound and well suited for the readers of BMC Medical Research Methodology. Therefore, I have only minor comments to the manuscript.

In the beginning of the introduction, issues related to clinical trials are brought up. This, clearly, relates to this study, but, since the current study is based on an epidemiological setting, I feel it may be a bit misleading to begin with discussing clinical trials. Therefore, I would recommend the authors to slightly revise the introduction such that it is clear from the beginning that this study does not involve a clinical trial, and take this into account also in the abstract.

In the methods section, I would recommend the authors to report the reasons for not participating in the study (out of 1521 those 1247 who were not recruited to HSS). Furthermore, it would be nice to know how long the interviews lasted in average and which assessments had been completed before the interview. Since the assessments that were completed after the interview are not reflected in the participants' answers, the authors should take notice of this in the discussion.

The participants of this study did not have significant health problems. Therefore, the study cannot enlighten the problem stated in the beginning of the introduction/abstract of multi-morbid older people not being represented in clinical trials/epidemiological studies, since the results represent only the views of healthy older people. This issue should be discussed in the limitations of the study. Further, while revising the introduction, the authors should be careful not to build expectations on this study giving answers to how could multi-morbid people be motivated to participate in studies. Similarly, the fact that the participants were highly active, and therefore probably more likely to participate also in studies, should be noticed in the discussion.

Page 7, line 110: I do not understand the first sentence of the data analysis section - what is meant by "Framework"?
Page 7, lines 126-127: I think that this notion of the interviews being conducted until no more information was emerging should be placed in the methods section and not in the data analysis section.

**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.

Unable to assess

**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?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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