Reviewer’s report

Title: "Blood transfusion in elderly patients with chronic anemia: a qualitative analysis of the general practitioners' attitudes"

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Reviewer: Richard Oscar Francis

Reviewer's report:

The goal of this manuscript was to identify the attitudes of general practitioners (GPs) regarding blood transfusion in older adult patients with chronic anemia. Through obtaining this information the authors sought to understand how the GPs decided whether to contact a transfusion center. Through analyzing the responses of 20 practitioners, the authors generate a model (figure 1) of the decision making process of a general practitioner for whether or not to transfuse.

While the manuscript does seek to address an important topic of figuring out what drives the decision to transfuse RBCs in a given patient population, it is not clear how the information provided should be used to change practice or improve patient care since many details of the data are not shared.

Major Comments:

1. The authors put forth that the decision to transfuse a patient with chronic anemia depends heavily on the condition that is causing the anemia and associated factors. Therefore it would be helpful if the authors provided information about the medical conditions treated by these practitioners in order to help put their responses in context.

2. The authors should provide more information about the recruitment of these GPs for this study. How was it advertised? How were they chosen? Was it completely random or did they target a specific subset of physicians. How was it decided that 29 physicians were adequate to call and that n=20 was a sufficient study population?

3. The manuscript would benefit from more quantitation of the data that was collected. It would be helpful to know what percentage of practitioners expressed a given viewpoint. This information would be helpful not only in giving a better picture of the range of responses but would also help with discussing their possible interventions for improving patient care. For example, since it seems like there are 11 questions it would be great if they could quantitate the responses to these 11 questions.
4. If possible the author should address what role scientific data plays in the decision-making process of the general practitioners. While there are not studies that directly address this given clinical scenario it would be good to know what these GPs know in general about the data that exists for closely-related scenarios (i.e. liberal vs. restrictive transfusion thresholds in the setting of cardiac disease, etc).

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

No

**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.

No

**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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