Reviewer’s report

Title: Recruiting General Practitioners for palliative care research in primary care: real-life barriers explained

Version: 0 Date: 24 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Yvonne Engels

Reviewer's report:

This is an important topic: recruiting difficulties in primary GP palliative care research. However, the paper is not well structured, much too lang with too much details which makes it difficult to read.
What I suggest, which really is a major, major revision:

Abstract:
In the abstract you have information, which is not provided in the results section of the manuscript, like the numbers of eligible and contacted GPs. You conclude that there is high interest. I cannot understand that conclusion reading the rest of the abstract.

Introduction:
Much much too lang, and a lot of information in the methods should be included in the methods section (e.g. page 4, lines 77-87)
Page 3 line 59: it would be much easier to look at the average number of deaths per year per GP.

Methods:
I miss a summary of aims, projectteam, tasks, rational for all this, as described in the study protocol. How many GPs, how many patients, how much time etc.
It would be much easier to read and shorter if you make a figure or a box with the recruitment activities.

Results
A figure with all the numbers, starting with the number of eligible GPs, and ending with the number of included GPs and included patients would be much easier and shorter. I would only use the results section to describe the qualitative data. Much to much en to detailed information now. For me, the interesting part starts at page 13 (but too long)
Discussion

Much too long again. On page 16, I miss the strategy to include via the hospital (which you describe as successful in the results section). This also appeared very successful in a study of Mitchell G (Australia). Duenk et al included about 250 patients with advanced COPD in six hospitals during an acute exacerbation within one year! Although she performed a hospital based intervention, inclusion in hospital might also be the solution for general practice research.

Another suggestion: probably the GPs need training before they want to participate.

And another suggestion that appeared very successful in a study on ACP by GPs with persons with dementia: we asked the GPs who participated to immediately select patients. That appeared very successful regarding the patient inclusion part. (submitted paper, not yet published)

So: kill your own darlings and make the paper much shorter. Limit yourself and don't give too much details.

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.

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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