Reviewer’s report

Title: Perspective of healthy asymptomatic patients requesting general blood tests from their physicians: A qualitative study

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Reviewer: Davorina Petek

Reviewer’s report:

The paper presents very important topic for practical work of a general practitioner. It focuses on the views of the patients about their reasons for the requests for blood tests. There has been some qualitative research on this topic, so, is anything new to be found?

Overall, the paper is too long for what it has to say. Some important aspects are missing: such as experience of the patients which supports or not the request. It also misses the opportunity how the patients perceive doctor's role and if they want physician's advice in their wish to perform a "preventive" blood test or they just want to be referred by their own decision?

Introduction: presents the topic and the literature well.

Methods: please correct the citation 37 in the text. The researchers promise to explore experience of the patients about testing, but the paper is all about the opinion of the patients. Did they have the experience or did they ask for a blood test for the first time? Did the opinion support the experience? Or change it?

Sample and population: please describe inclusion criteria precisely: the main inclusion criterion was that they asked for a blood test at this check up. I suggest to delete a list of chronic medical condition, because it is not needed and the list is not complete (for example chronic lung diseases are not mentioned and I believe they were also an exclusion criterion). Please describe the participants in the results. The important characteristic would also be if they - being asymptomatic and healthy - asked and performed the blood test in the past.

Research procedure: the description of the interviewers (in the Research Tools…) should be put in the line 42.

Research Tools and Instruments: I find that some important aspects are not addressed in the interview guide and therefore not in the results and specifically lacking to back up the discussion: one aspect is patients (possible) experience and the other is patient decision in the light of communication with the physician. Where is the physician in this picture? Did he say anything? Did a patient discuss his request? It would be very useful if by asking the patients we found out how they perceive doctors reflection on their request. There is a citation reflecting this (pt No14), but does not come out much in the results.
Data analysis: please describe the stages of the analysis clearer in presenting the steps of the analysis. Did you perform coding first? What/where was the place of subcategories?

Results are presented by simple descriptive thematic analysis. Presentation of the results is much too long, disperse and repeating. Please describe results in a systematic and shorter way.

For example: Theme 1 and 2 are partly overlapping and some citations presented in theme 1 could be also in theme 2 (for ex. Citation 10 in theme 2 could be in theme 1 as well). For example in theme 1 the routine blood testing is described as a responsibility to a person himself and also as a way to early detect a disease, which is also a part of the theme 3. Also, in this theme some patient views about the role of a physician are briefly mentioned.

Discussion: It is too long and in some parts does not reflect the results of the study (such as p18, line 37-54, p19, line 8-40: true, but very briefly based on the results of this study). On p 20 line 1-12- again - not reflected in the results. Were patients faced with these facts during the visit to the office and later during the interview? It seems that the interviews should go deeper into the topic, reasons, views of the patients about the specific points that are discussed in this part of the paper. The study would be much better if patient beliefs would be confronted with the doctor's knowledge of the usefulness of the procedure. It would also help to the reader to describe if the patients have to come to the practice with the request for a lab test in order to have the expenses covered by the health insurance? Is the agreement of a physician needed in that sense?

Limitations: Please expand the limitations: to other stakeholders, etc.

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.

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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