Reviewer’s report

Title: The association between PaTz and improved palliative care in the primary care setting: a cross-sectional survey.

Version: 0 Date: 30 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Janet Hanley

Reviewer’s report:

This paper reports an online survey of GPs and nurses who provide palliative care and either do or do not participate in PaTz groups. The response rate to the survey is unknown due to the method of recruitment. There were 327 participants.

Although this paper is very readable, there are a number of issues which need to be addressed before it can be published.

The meaning of PaTz is not explained in either the title or the abstract and as this is all that many people read, this needs to be addressed. Also the title would convey more information if the word study was replaced with survey.

In the first paragraph of the results the figures in brackets seem to refer to PaTz participating/non participating professionals but this is not stated

A proportion of the professionals had not heard of PaTz before so were not speaking from experience, but there does not seem to be any adjustment for this or exploration of the impact of this. This is clearly the primary reason for non participation in PaTz for these individuals but is not mentioned in the discussion.

About 30% of respondents did not provide patient details. This is a significant proportion and should be addressed in the discussion. It is possible that these were the patients whose care was not managed as well as those patients who were reported.

Apart from these issues the analysis is thorough.

Looked at objectively, the survey provides little support for the value of PaTz and the authors need to take a more critical approach to the methodology overall. The results show that clinicians agree that PaTz could help in terms of knowledge etc, but it would be hard for anyone to disagree with this. In terms of care provided to individual patients the only difference between PaTz participants and non participants is that more issues were discussed with other professionals, but as this in part of the PaTz process it is almost inevitable. A different approach such as interviews or focus groups may have provided more insight into the benefits of and barriers to this initiative.
On page 11 there is a contradictory statement in relation to the number of subjects discussed with patients. The adjusted analysis showed no difference between participants/ non participants.

**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

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No

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