Reviewer's report

Title: Professional Roles of General Practitioners, Community Pharmacists and Specialist Providers in Collaborative Medication Deprescribing - A Qualitative Study

Version: 0 Date: 04 May 2020

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript. This is an interesting and noteworthy research topic that sheds light on specialists' perspectives on their role in deprescribing. Specialist involvement is a commonly cited barrier to deprescribing and gaining further understanding of their opinion can be valuable at informing other research in this field. I hope that you find my comments beneficial to your manuscript.

Major comments:

*Abstract (results): Need for clear, organized categorized themes. The results in the main body of the manuscript are reported according to the interaction between each stakeholder. This categorization can be used to effectively summarize the information
*Introduction: Setting the scene for stakeholder roles in Germany is interesting to read and crucial to providing context for the study. However, I recommend:
  ☐ consolidating this information in one paragraph and summarizing research in other multidisciplinary qualitative studies that have examined prescribing challenges in multimorbid older adults (e.g.: Turner, J.P., Edwards, S., Stanners, M., Shakib, S. and Bell, J.S., 2016. What factors are important for deprescribing in Australian long-term care facilities? Perspectives of residents and health professionals. BMJ open, 6(3), p.e009781; Smith, S.M., O'Kelly, S. and O'Dowd, T., 2010. GPs' and pharmacists' experiences of managing multimorbidity: a 'Pandora's box'. Br J Gen Pract, 60(576), pp.e285-e294)
  ☐ Explicitly stating the gap that this study addresses. For example, limited knowledge exists regarding German stakeholder perspectives on deprescribing, etc.
*Design and setting: Lines 124-125 - please provide more detail regarding purpose of larger study. Is part of this published? If so, please list ref.
*Methods: Please report methods according to Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ-32) checklist
*Results:
  -Table 1: Abridged version of themes not clear. Sub-themes are also not clear. Not all quotes have a corresponding sub-theme. Perhaps merging was not done for some quotes that fall under the same sub-theme.
  -Might be useful to present data according to the headings in the guide discussion (supplementary file). This would follow the natural presentation of data and would be easier for the reader to identify where this information is derived from
*Discussion: The novelty of this research needs to be more clearly stated. For example, lines 447-449 and lines 461-463 from 'Strengths & limitations' can be moved to the first paragraph of discussion to highlight how this study is different to previously conducted explorative studies
*Strengths and limitations: Although authors rightfully mention how the results are only relevant to a German context/health care system, I believe stating the lack of generalizability of results to all stakeholders would also be beneficial.

Minor comments:

*Abstract:
- Line 29: Remove "even"
- Results: How many members of each stakeholder group were recruited? Please mention in abstract
- Lines 41-44: Please revise to make message clearer. Not sure what "conflicting role positions/functions" means. Suggest including what impact this directly has on deprescribing instead of on underutilization of services. What services are being referred to?
- Line 52: Please remove '-' from "Health-systems". Replace with healthcare systems

*Introduction:

-Multi-morbid can be replaced with multimorbid. Please fix throughout manuscript.
-Line 73: Please use consistent language throughout manuscript. Drug or medication
-Line 83: Remove "conduct"
-Line 86: Fix the apostrophe following "pharmacists" to go the other way ('). Please fix similar typos throughout manuscript
-Line 88: What does study base mean? Does this mean previously published literature?
-Line 91: Separate into two words (Policy-makers)
-Line 101-102: Rephrase to "In Germany, only physicians can prescribe medications…" Need a reference after "pharmaceutical sales distributor primarily"
-Line 106: Separate healthcare-approach into two words
-Line 108: Separate health-records into two words
-Line 211: Separate penny-pincher into two words

Methods:

*Lines 145-146: Move mention of ethical approval to be in the first sentence under "design and setting"

Results:

*Lines 241- 242: Please simplify language
*Lines 285: Perhaps using the word "barrier" would be more appropriate here rather than "inhibitor". It tends to be the most commonly used word to refer to challenges in this context. Replace throughout manuscript
*Line 314: Remove (insert table 3)
Conclusion: Please consolidate the main, most interesting findings of the paper in two to three sentences.

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

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

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

Reviewer Publication Consent. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0) if this manuscript is accepted for publication. Any comments that I do not wish to be included in the published report have been included as confidential comments to the editor, which will not be published. If you are not happy for us to publish this report, please contact the editorial office before completing the review. If you wish, you can include your name in your published report. Please note you must decide whether to include your name at the start of the process and confirm this decision whenever prompted. If you change your decision later, we will not be able to publish your name.

I agree to the terms of the CC-BY 4.0 license; please publish my name with my report.