Reviewer's report

**Title:** Home Support Workers Perceptions of Family Members of their Older Clients: A Qualitative Study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 17 September 2015

**Reviewer:** Fei Wu

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

**Abstract**

**Background**

It would be better if the authors had briefly discussed the significance of the study (e.g., improve clients experience care, and connect the formal and informal care system).

**Methods**

I understand the need to be succinct while writing an abstract. However, the methods section is a little awkward to read.

**Background**

1. It would be helpful to also introduce the current care system for the elderly in Canada (or British Columbia in particular) and the role of home-based care in the system. It will also help the readers to identify the significance of this important work.

2. The logic of focusing on the HSW’s perspective of family members who also provide care only came clear on page 5 line 113-117. My understanding of the authors reasoning is that there is a shortage of HSW and their retention has been identified as a major issue in supporting home based care. It is important to understand the issue from the HSW’s perspective in the community context. However, past literature is limited and mainly focused on family members’ perceptions or within the residential care environment. The Background section can be rearranged in a way that smoothly leads the audience to your study focus on HSW rather than family members or both.

3. Was there any theoretical framework guiding the study? I would like to see a discussion on the theoretical background/relevance of the study.

**Methods**

1. Did the analysis team use any software dedicated to analyzing qualitative data?

2. Did the analytical process follow any guidelines for conducting qualitative research?
Results
1. Is it possible to provide a little more than pseudo names while using direct quotes from participants, such as age and work status (full-time vs. part-time)?
2. Again, the way the results section was organized following a certain theoretical framework? Or the researchers just let the themes emerge themselves and then constructed their own theory of home based care?

Discussion/Conclusion
1. In my opinion, the authors started to discuss or draw conclusions from line 351, page 14, because it is not a presentation of results anymore, but more of a summary and discussion of the results.
2. Family members can provide informational and instrumental help that facilitates HSW’s work. Meanwhile, there are both individual level factors and organizational level factors that make it difficult to work with family members of elderly clients. Intentionally or unintentionally treating HSW as a servant to the whole family creates extra instrumental work for the workers. Family members being rude and suspicious also created extra emotional work for the HSWs. In addition, rigid organizational care plan also creates extra communication work between the family member and the HSW. What seems to mitigate and connect the family member and HSW is the empathy workers hold toward their clients and their families.
3. If #2 is a correct summary of how the results section is being organized, can the discussion section follow the same positive, negative, and mitigating factors so it is easier to follow? I recommend using subtitles like the results section so these two sections correspond to each other.
4. I think the authors can integrate discussion and conclusion into one section.
5. I like how the authors discussed the implications of the current difficulties faced by the HSW. It would make this article even stronger if there are recommendations on the individual, inter-personal, as well as organizational levels to improve the HSW-family member relationship.

Limitations
1. What about other limitations besides not getting the family members’ side of the story? For example, the study was conducted within one city in Canada. It was limited to HSW with a certain English proficiency.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests