Reviewer’s report

Title: Crucial aspects promoting meaning and purpose in life: perceptions of nursing home residents

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Reviewer: Barbara Bowers

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Crucial Aspects promoting meaning and purpose in life: perceptions of nursing home residents

1. Using Gadamerian Hermeneutics, this study explores how 18 nursing home residents in a Norwegian nursing home find meaning and purpose in life.

2. This paper is eloquently and clearly written. I enjoyed reading it.

3. There are currently many published articles concerning quality of life for nursing home residents. While this study is not about quality of life in general, purpose and meaning are clearly related to quality of life. I think the background for this paper was very well written and quite interesting. I was wondering if the authors might help put this study in the larger perspective of quality of life research, which I assume they are aware of. It would be important to at least recognize this. I am not suggesting that they replace what is currently there with a long treatise on quality of life, but only to acknowledge it. That would be important to place this paper in the larger literature. I would also suggest using quality of life as key words so that people looking at resident quality of life, well being would find this paper. It adds quite a bit and takes a novel approach to the topic. There might also be some room to acknowledge this larger body of research and point out the novelty of this study, in the discussion section.

4. Empathetic should be changed to empathic

5. I would suggest changing 'Nursing care and nurse patient interaction therefore act as meaning-promoting resources by facilitating positive emotions and moods.' To 'Nursing care and nurse patient interaction therefore have the potential to.' This would acknowledge that nursing care does not always do this.

6. You discuss the connectedness of residents to nursing staff but do not mention connectedness to family and friends outside the nursing home (until the discussion) or other residents. Tonya Roberts published a very nice paper which describes the importance of relationships and connectedness of residents to other residents.
7. I am a bit confused by your statement that 'The experience of meaning in everyday life in a nursing home is related to residents' physical and cognitive capability, a sense of belonging and feeling needed.' Are you saying that people with dementia can not experience any of these things?

8. I was hoping you would say more about self determination. It seems a bit at odds with the preceding sections.

9. The sentence that identifies previously documented experiences such as loneliness, loss and social support, depression, sadness and sense of coherence. This reads awkwardly. Some are positive attributes (sense of coherence, social support) and some are negative (sadness, depression, loss).

10. In the objective…..purpose of this study was to explore aspects (of what?). Aspects suggests aspects of something. This appears again in the data analysis section.

11. Data analysis section: I am aware that page limits are challenging and do not see anything to cut, but I would love to see more detail in the analysis section. Some examples, illustrations of what you found early, how your analysis evolved, would be great. This would help readers follow your process.

12. Results: I found it difficult to see the link between meaning and 'experiencing physical and mental well being' and 'Having ones personal preferences and needs met.' There is nothing in the quotes that suggests the responses are related to purpose or meaning. Preference and well being are not necessarily about purpose or meaning. Can you make the link clearer? In particular, please provide quotes to support the 'compassion and charity' of nurses' actions.

13. I'm not clear what is meant by 'impulses from society'

14. Can you provide a quote to show the link between well being and nurturance of patients hope. Very important.

15. Can you provide a quote that relates to patient sense of worthiness. I really did not see this in your quotes

16. I hope my suggestions will help you make this a stronger manuscript. It is a very important study. I applaud the author's work.

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.

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

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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