Reviewer's report

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

Version: 0 Date: 15 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Martin Connolly

Reviewer's report:

Manuscript Number: BGTC-D-17-00191

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

This is a potentially valuable paper in an extremely important field which until recently has been under researched. However this reviewer questions some aspects of the paper's methodology (or at least the presentation of the methodology).

Major Criticisms:

1. Page 2; line 51: The phrase 'and individuals without dementia thus represent a minority' is superfluous and should be removed.

2. Page 5; first line: It is unclear to this reviewer why a study that seems to conclude in 2011 is only now being offered for publication. The authors need to provide some evidence that they are not simply salami slicing their data. This reviewer would suggest that they send copies of all papers published from this study (reference 34 and any others) to the editor for perusal.

3. Page 5; line 11: It is unclear to this reviewer why the interviews were only conducted at the end of the follow up period.

4. Page 5; first paragraph: The authors need to confirm that they have ethical committee approval and include the ethics committee reference number.

5. Bottom of Page 5 and top of Page 6: The sentence that straddles these two pages is an opinion. How do the authors know that this is true? This is vital as it is an important part of their methodology and needs justification.

6. The very next sentence beginning 'Lastly, we explored....' has a meaning which eludes this reviewer. Further explanation is required.
7. The first sentence of the next paragraph beginning 'Reading theoretical works…….' again is an opinion and further explanation of the evidence to confirm this opinion is required. As it stands this sentence simply means 'we are good at it'.

8. The next sentence beginning 'Based on our inductive-deductive…..' begs the question as to which other perspectives are there and why were these not chosen.

9. Results section; first paragraph: There are other examples but the most obvious is on Page 9, line 19 where the authors claim that 'the results document…..'. The results may indeed document what they claim but the paper does not (in its current form).

10. Page 9; lines 12-14: I am unclear what the reviewers mean by 'impulses from society'.

11. Page 10; line 4: In what way are the insights 'deeper'?

12. Page 10; lines 9-16: This statement may be accurate but evidence around the methodology of the study and detailed results that would allow us to assess its accuracy are not provided. This has been alluded to above but one further example would be that the questions used in the questionnaire clearly need to be non-leading questions. Some reassuring examples of the questions have been given but it would be helpful if the questionnaire could be included as an appendix to the paper. Further, this sentence is also only true if the authors perceptions (which they admit are preconceived) are accurate - they have provided no evidence that they are. Finally regarding this sentence this author would suggest that these conclusions are not in fact new. The reviewer has little doubt that they are true but it is unclear in what way they expand what we already know about appropriate and humane treatment of individuals at whatever age and in whatever situation.

The results of this study offer no surprises. They are intuitively 'correct' and thus I do not doubt their accuracy. However, in the opinion of this reviewer, this paper adds little new knowledge especially in light of the fact as confirmed by most of the references quoted in the discussion section much of this is already known in the general population. Why should it be any different in the older population in nursing homes? The authors need to expand and clarify the methodology particularly in a manner that demonstrates that the methodology is not 'circular'.

**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.

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

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

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. 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/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal