Reviewer’s report

Title: Frailty: An in-depth qualitative study exploring the views of community care staff

Version: 0 Date: 04 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Ulrike Junius-Walker

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting qualitative study investigating the understanding of frailty from the perspective of community health and care workers in England. The aim of the study is clearly defined and has three aspects: to explore the concept of frailty, to examine whether the professionals share a common understanding, and to inquire about the assessment methods applied for frailty. The subject is important because managing frailty requires cooperation within the primary care team in terms of a common basis of understanding, diagnosis and care provision. Overall the study is well conducted and well written. However some revisions could add to the clarity of the paper and to its practical implications.

The methods seem adequate. However they are a little briefly described. Members of the neighbourhood teams with different professional backgrounds were interviewed employing a piloted semi-structured interview guide. This guide could be explained further or appended as an additional file to find out what aspects of the three key themes were included.

The findings of the study are plausible and in parts "catchy" in a positive sense. The first finding relates to the comprehensive description of the concept of frailty. Frailty is seen as an "umbrella term" encompassing physical, psychological, social, environmental and ecological factors that interact. Some factors have been described as contributing towards frailty and others as being more of a consequence of frailty (cause-effect relation). And here it becomes a bit confusing. E.g. the negative emotional state has been described as a consequence of frailty: "the loss of independence… (p. 8, 208) (as part of the frailty state) fosters a negative emotional state". Other factors seem to have a more contributing role, like physical state, mental state, little social engagements, living environments and economic factors. I wonder whether the two aspects, contributing towards frailty or being a consequence of frailty can be more clearly mapped out. Components, such as loss of function (mobility, ADL, falls), negative emotions, loss of autonomy and isolation seem to be an interactive blend that are core features frailty.

The second finding refers to the assessment of frailty and the sharing of this information. The third finding deals with the shared understanding of frailty and has been done to gain this shared understanding.

There are no findings that deal with the (dynamic) course of frailty, the delimitation towards disabilities and robust people. Instead the conception of frailty comes across as rather static and well advanced.
The discussion is generally well written. Yet I think it remains a bit too much on the level of comparing the results with those from literature. Instead it could also reflect more upon the implications of the findings for health care. Especially as there are some results that relate to diagnostic, rehabilitative and supportive measures.

I would like to suggest some...

Major revisions

1. Give more details about your interview-guide (see above)

2. Is it possible to gain more clarity about the (cause-effect) relations of the defining factors with the frailty state (see above)?

3. Are there any statements that attest to the dynamic feature of frailty as stated in the conclusion (page 16, 442)?

4. Discussion: Add a paragraph how the results dealing with practical improvements or good practices could enrich current practice.

Minor revisions

1. Revise structure of sentence on page 15, 403.

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:

Acceptable

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