Reviewer's report

Title: ADVANCE CARE PLANNING DISPOSITIONS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION

Version: 0 Date: 21 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Elizabeth Weathers

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

Overall, the study is an important one and gives due consideration to perceptions of other legal dispositions aside from Advance Directives (i.e. healthcare proxy and lasting power of attorney). However, I would recommend that the background and context require some improvements to ensure the significance of the topic is clear to the reader. Clarification of terms throughout the manuscript is warranted to make them easily recognizable to a global audience. For example, it is not clear until halfway through the background that the term 'disposition' is referring to legal dispositions for ACP. Perhaps inclusion of the word legal from the beginning would be helpful in this case. The term 'tools' is also used intermittently to refer to the legal dispositions. This is confusing for the reader. Also, in the abstract, the authors use the abbreviation Lc65+ without explaining what is meant or referring to the original study. I have provided some grammatical suggestions in my comments; however, the manuscript would benefit from a thorough proof-read to improve sentence structure and grammar. The content is novel and of importance, but this is not clearly demonstrated to the reader due to structural and terminology issues. My suggested changes below should improve the flow of writing and help to ensure the reader grasps the importance of the content immediately.

Background:

Some sentences were not clear, especially to a reader who is not familiar with the Swiss legalities on advance care planning. I think this section needs further development to be very clear on terms and definitions of terms from the beginning. May I also make the following specific suggested changes to the authors:

*Page 3, Lines 36-43: the sentence beginning with 'Because' and ending with 'population' is too long and should be divided into two sentences as it relates to two separate statements. Also, I would encourage the authors to avoid beginning a sentence with 'Because'.

*Page 4, Line 12: should it be 'outside of the end-of-life population'?

*Page 4, Line 12: Change 'these dispositions' as it is not clear what dispositions the authors are referring to.
*Page 4, Line 17: change the word 'divergence' to association or correlation.

*Page 4, Line 29: what is meant by 'such dispositions'? Be more specific.

*Page 4, Line 26/27: the sentence beginning with 'However' states that no studies have examined the relationship between perceptions of advance care planning legal dispositions and knowledge. Yet, the next sentence seems to imply that there has already been a study conducted to measure knowledge, use and perceptions. Is the study described in the manuscript based on further analysis of data collected in this other cited study? Please clarify.

*Page 4, Line 36/37: the sentence beginning with 'The current work…' should be moved to link with the next paragraph on the theoretical model.

Methods:

Data source and participants section:

Please confirm if the survey was sent at the same time as the Lausanne cohort follow-up annual questionnaires?

Data collection:

Please give further information on the validity and reliability of the survey instrument used - what efforts were made to ensure the face and content validity (as a minimum)?

The sections describing the questions on knowledge and perceptions of dispositions could be integrated into the data collection section without subheadings. These paragraphs would be better placed right after the 1st paragraph in the data collection section followed by the 'Covariates' section (which should be re-labelled as 'Demographics'), and then finishing with the paragraph about the response rate.

I would recommend the following specific terminology changes:

*Page 5, Line 55: use the word 'integrated' instead of nested

*Page 6, Line 12: use the word 'developed' instead of 'built'

Results:

Description of the sample:

Page 9, Line 36/37: Change to 'About three out of ten persons reported no chronic disease (of the options provided) and one half had been hospitalized in the five years prior to the survey. Half of
the sample were worried about their health and the vast majority had experience at least one stressful event in the past five years'.

Discussion:

The subheadings do not seem to be appropriate. I would encourage the authors to better integrate the content of the discussion on page 11 and 12.

Limitations:

Please add a comment on the questionnaire and limitations in that regard.

I would encourage the authors to revise and submit. There are many changes required; however, most are easily addressed by a thorough proof-read for flow, sentence structure, sequencing, etc. As a result, the importance of the study results and implications is not clear enough to the reader and the content is undermined. I wish you the best of luck with the revisions and look forward to seeing a revised version.

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
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