Reviewer’s report

Title: Perspectives and experiences of compassion in long-term care facilities within Canada: A Qualitative Study of Patients, Family Members and Health Care Providers

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Reviewer: Katrien Luijkx

Reviewer's report:

It is with great pleasure that I reviewed the manuscript "heart work: a thematic analysis of compassion in long-term care". I agree with the authors that compassion in long-term care is a topic of utmost importance and they explore compassion in a nice way.

Despite my enthusiasm for the manuscript, I do have a number of issues that I would like the authors to address.

1. In my opinion, the title does not justify the rich data of the manuscript. Therefore, I would like to ask the authors to reformulate the title of their manuscript. The words "thematic analysis" are not really of added value, I think.

2. Although I agree with the authors that compassion is an important issue, it is introduced very quickly in the background section and is therefore not convincing. The authors should pay more attention to introducing the elaborate more on the introduce the aim and research question.

3. Moreover, the concepts 'long-term care' and 'palliative care' are used alternately in the background section. That is confusing. However, the results section seems to be about long-term care. I agree that residential LTC is in mainly about care in the last phase of life. Nevertheless, most LTC facilities, at least in the Netherlands, do have separate units for palliative care. So, residential LTC is not exactly the same as palliative care. Therefore, I ask the authors to explain the difference and similarity between the two more carefully or to focus the whole manuscript on LTC. I do understand that this is due to the fact that this study is part of larger study, but this should explained more extensively.

4. The authors should explain why holding focus groups is the best method for data gathering for this topic. I think, observations or individual interviews could also provide very valuable data and insights. Furthermore, compassion is a topic that everyone embraces in theory, but to bring it into practice is a real challenge. Therefore, I expect that answers will be socially accepted. How did the authors account for this?
5. The authors should be more explicit about how they came to their two main themes. I expect them to be formulated beforehand.

6. 117 individuals participated in this study: that is a great number, certainly in qualitative research! Data of all participant groups seem to be merged in the results section. That is a pity because it can be expected that various participant groups (eg residents, family and employees in LTC) experience and value compassion in their own way. In the results section this is accounted for a little bit by mentioning the participant group for each result and citation. Because I expect that the experiences and value of compassion will be considerably different for employees in comparison to residents and family members, I would like the authors to address this issue, at least in the discussion section. I am even of the opinion that the perspectives of residents and family members should be of more leading in studies about compassion or for instance person centered care, compared to that of employees in LTC.

7. Moreover, in residential long-term care a considerable percentage of residents has dementia or other cognitive limitations. How is this accounted for in this study?

8. Finally, reading this manuscript, several similarities between compassion and person centered care came to the front. I would like the authors to elaborate on the similarities and differences between compassion and person centered care, or show the added value of compassion to person centered care.

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.

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
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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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