Reviewer’s report

Title: Was it worth it? Older adults’ experiences of participating in a population-based cohort study – a focus group study

Version: 0 Date: 14 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Dorly Deeg

Reviewer's report:

This concerns a revised version of a paper that I first reviewed in November 2018 (BGTC-D-18-00479).

The authors have certainly worked with the comments I made. The purpose and background are now clear, and the Discussion is much more to the point. Also, the role of MRI and LP testing is now clearly described as additional.

Regarding the sense of responsibility (my previous point 5) that I deduce from some of the description of the findings, remains a matter of interpretation. The authors write in their letter that none of the questions to the focus groups triggered a discussion of this theme (directly, my addition). But I keep thinking that it might be an underlying theme in some of the statements (see lines 281-285).

The current version of the paper, meanwhile, could be improved in several points (minor and major mixed):

1. The authors tend to use long sentences that not always flow correctly, and make for difficult reading. The very first sentence of the Abstract an lines 117-120 is an example. For one thing, it includes the word 'experience' twice. Please cut in two. There are more examples throughout the paper.
2. In the Abstract, the Conclusions section is disproportionally long. Moreover, it includes new findings (lines 62-64), which should be moved to the Results section. (On the other hand, lines 50-51 in the Results section are basically a repetition of the previous sentence and can be omitted.) There is also a discontinuity in style, as in line 64 'you' is used, while elsewhere a more neutral phrasing is used. In line 65, it is not clear what 'It' refers to.
3. Throughout the paper, it is not made clear why the focus group approach is chosen. In lines 136-137 of the Design section it is only stated that this approach is based on 'a collective understanding of participants' views.' In the Discussion section (lines 664 ff.) the focus group approach is critically discussed. Apparently, the authors found that this approach worked, but why did they choose it to begin with? What alternatives were considered?
4. In line 152, it would be good to state since when the H70 studies are running, as this is not common knowledge outside Sweden.
5. The theme 'unpleasant examinations and key decisions' is not well-labelled. Do the authors mean: 'unpleasant key decisions'? If not, it would be better to separate the two parts. 'Key decisions about test outcomes' would be a better label for a subtheme, and in fact, would also apply to outcomes from not-
unpleasant tests.
6. In the description of the theme 'hidden agenda' it seems that it pertains to a self-completion questionnaire (line 473). However, how can this issue be solved by 'professionalism of research staff' and 'good relationships with research staff' (see Discussion)? Such staff is not present during the self-completion.

7. Discussion, line 525: what 'risks' are meant?
8. Discussion, lines 530-531: how can the motive of 'seeking health access through the "back door"' compromise the representativeness - what groups would be over- or under-represented?
9. Discussion, line 599: 'health-literate organisation' is a new term, not further explained. Could the authors describe what they mean using common words?
10. Discussion, lines 608-609: What is 'problematic', the conflict or the person-centredness? Please use two sentences. Also, what aspect of 'quality of the H70 study' may be affected? (See also line 614.) This needs some expansion.
11. Under 'Limitations', in the first two paragraphs it is not clear what limitation is exactly addressed.
12. Lines 652-653 are superfluous, as the 'very dynamic' nature of small focus groups has already been stated a few lines earlier. The more so, as reference (10) is from this same research group.

_are the methods appropriate and well described?_
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

_Do 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.

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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.

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