Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Applying a new concept of embedding qualitative research: An example from a quantitative study of carers of people in later stage dementia

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 08 Jan 2019

**Reviewer:** Reviewer 2

**Reviewer's report:**

**PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:**

**OBJECTIVE** - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?
No - there are major issues

**DESIGN** - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?
Yes - the approach is appropriate

**EXECUTION** - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?
No - there are major issues

Statistics - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?
N/A - there are no statistics in this study

**INTERPRETATION** - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?
No - there are major issues

**OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL** - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?
No - manuscript has some fundamental flaw(s)

**PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:**

GENERAL COMMENTS: The paper is interesting with a wealth of collected data using a method proposed as novel. However, the aim of the paper is unclear - is it to evaluate the novel method, or to also provide evidence for the perception of carers about providing support for a loved one at the end stages of dementia?
If the aim is to evaluate the method, then the paper should reflect on the process, discuss how the method was developed and implemented, and highlight potential areas for further research before this
is a commonly used methodology. This is not done, instead data is presented from the qualitative aspect as if the study aim is to understand carers' perspectives of providing support. This is interesting but not novel and also isn't highlighted as the main aim of the paper. Overall, I found this confusing.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:
- The opening to the paper is incredibly negative, I know this is the reality of dementia, but some positives could also be highlighted.
- The research area described is not novel, so if the aim is to get this information in a 'new way', this should be the focus of the introduction.
- The recruitment methods are not discussed anywhere.
- The data analysis section is unclear, it is cluttered with terminology without definitions given.
- Whilst the inclusion of the PPI group is a strength, the authors included so little information it is not useful. Who did the PPI group consist of? How were they recruited? What relevant experience did they have to contribute to data collection?
- There was discussion that people have difficulty answering standardised questions - how does this fit with the aim/purpose of the paper?
- It is unclear how Figure 2 relates to a standardised measure, the translation from the conversation about a specific question to the qualitative response would be more useful.
- It is important to acknowledge which questions the comments arose during - were they relevant to the comments given? The triangulation of this data is crucial and is missing from this paper. Do people's qualitative responses represent their quantitative data? The authors propose that this method is useful but without using direct comparison with the most commonly used method.
- Challenging the wording of questions is a separate issue and one not focused on here, so its inclusion was confusing.
- There is extensive literature about the perspectives of carers well-being/support needs - what is novel here? This is not well explained in the discussion.
- The overall message of the paper is unclear.

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.

**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.

No

**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

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