Reviewer’s report

Title: ‘It’s what you do that makes a difference’ An interpretative phenomenological analysis of health care professionals and home care workers experiences of nutritional care for people living with dementia at home

Version: 0 Date: 26 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Thomas Holland

Reviewer's report:

Overall impression:
The study is an interesting take on perceptions and experiences, concerning nutritional care, of individuals that encounter persons suffering from dementia whether it be in the form of general care or medical care. I believe the four "superordinate" themes identified are quite translational to differing populations across the world and professions in the medical community as a whole. There are always questions around nutritional status when thinking about chronic diseases, especially diseases of aging. Specifically, dementia, of all types, has become a major concern as the prevalence grows. What we can do as professionals and caregivers to attenuate components of the disease process, or at the very least, improve quality of life, is at the forefront of many people's minds. This work addresses the important, albeit not often studied, viewpoint of the health professional and caregiver regarding nutritional status and care of persons with dementia.

Intro:

No concerns

I appreciate the author's candor in stating that many healthcare professionals are inexperienced and uncertain of how to give nutritional recommendations. We have to recognize and reflect on our weaknesses for the betterment of our patient populations.

Methods:

Study design: Line 115: I assume the interview only happened once; I would like to see that stated though. If it were more, that would be important to the manuscript.
Table 1: line 138: Other demographics including age and race/ethnicity of the study population is important and should be included. Practice years and sex can certainly effect perceptions; I would argue that age and race/ethnicity are just as important.

Results: No concerns

Methodical and thoughtful compilation of the results

Discussion:

Attentive conclusions drawn with thoughtful solutions

Strengths and limitation: line 546: I recognize this is an initial study; however, you draw conclusions and make practice suggestions i.e. line 536, 575. It should be reiterated that this was an extremely small sample n=7 with no follow up and conducted over a 3-4 month period.

I would also suggest iteration of the season. Winter, when the data was collected, can affect many people's moods, perceptions etc. Seasonal affective disorder for both participants and their patients, sun-downing effect being more prominent in those with dementia, but especially during the winter, could lead to more difficulty with patients and thus change the participant's perception.

The study is only generalizable to those in southwest England. I think the concept can translate across the world as previously mentioned, but technically, there is no generalizability beyond your location, given differences, however major or minor, in healthcare systems, professions, and practices.

Line 573: Include "Our sample of" health care professionals…I appreciate the conclusion drawn however, again this is a sample of 7 with 5 being health care professionals and 1 physician. A larger sample would warrant the generalized statement of "HCP's and home care workers recognize there are clear benefits…"

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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