Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative study of the communication and information needs of people with learning disabilities and epilepsy with physicians, nurses and carers

Version: 0 Date: 22 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Veronica Lambert

Reviewer’s report:

Many thanks for inviting me to review this manuscript which reports on a qualitative study exploring people with intellectual disability and epilepsy, and their carers’ communication and information needs when interacting with physicians and nurses. Some comments for the author to consider include the following:

Abstract; Aim: Should this also include reference to carers’ (and should this also be reflected in the title of the manuscript); Method: Perhaps split the number 28 to reflect 15 people with ID & epilepsy participants who were community based and 13 carers; Results: The themes presented in the abstract do not match those presented in the paper

Background: This is a long background section that traverses between many issues perhaps a more streamlined succinct background section that does not lose the core arguments would engage the reader more; it would be good to get to the main problem/issue and gaps in knowledge that the study aimed to address quicker; interchangeably using the terms and referring to different studies related to adherence, compliance and concordance was a little difficult to follow and perhaps it is worth reflecting on these and what are the core issues/gaps in the literature around these issues that have informed the need to conduct this study as this was a little unclear. I did not get a sense from the background of what work has been conducted to date on the communication and information needs of people with ID & epilepsy and their carers’ to see what this study offers to that field. I would also be useful at some point in the paper to define what definition was being used for communication and information in this study and was there a specific focus such as health issues and / or health management which seemed to be referred to in the discussion (although I was unclear on what these terms i.e. health issues and health management were referring to and these might need clarification in the text). Clarify the aim at the end of the background section - it refers to health and social care professionals whereas the abstract and paper title refers to physicians and nurses.

Population: Provide justification for way people with mild ID were included - were those with moderate and profound ID excluded and if so, why? Re epilepsy - was there any eligibility criteria set for type and severity of epilepsy & seizures?

Data Collection: Should this read 13 carers?

Participants: Should epilepsy control be seizure control and how was good/poor seizure control defined? Any demographics on epilepsy & seizure type?
Results: This section would benefit from some further development in terms of description and interpretation of the themes and then use the quotations as examples reflecting these descriptions and interpretations; as currently it is largely reflective of just presenting quotations but it is clear how these reflect the developing themes which just need some further enhancement/refinement.

Discussion/Conclusion: Once the themes are developed and refined the discussion also warrants refinement it is very long and the findings of the current study get lost within extensive literature so it would be useful to keep the study findings to the fore and succinctly integrate literature to support/refute interpretations of the study's data. It is important to streamline the arguments made right throughout the manuscript; there should be some reference to study limitations also in the discussion.

Overall the manuscript is very long but working with the background and discussion section to present arguments more succinctly should help with reducing the word count a lot.

**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.

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.

I declare I have 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