Reviewer's report

Title: Triggers of suicide ideation and protective factors of actual executing suicide among fresh cases in older psychiatric outpatients: a qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 3 July 2014

Reviewer: Tonelle Handley

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. This is a well written paper providing valuable insight into the very important area of suicidality among older adults, and will make a great contribution to this field. Some suggested revisions are included below.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes, this is a very important and relevant research question that has been well defined by the authors.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The Methods section lacks some clarity, which makes it difficult to assess the appropriateness of the methods employed. Specific details which should be included are:

• Why was content analysis chosen as the method of data analysis? There are many ways to analyse qualitative data, so this choice should be justified. (major compulsory revision)

• How were themes determined and extrapolated from the data? At present, no information is provided about this. How many participants were required to talk about a concept before it was considered to be a “theme”? Was a theme something that was mentioned by all/the majority of the participants, or were some other criteria used? (major compulsory revision)

• How many people completed data analysis? Was this done by the RA only, or was a second rater included to ensure reliability? (minor compulsory revision)

• Was any qualitative data analysis software used? (minor compulsory revision)

• How was suicidal ideation assessed in participants? Was a standardised measure used? Were participants excluded if they had made a previous suicide attempt? (minor compulsory revision)

3. Are the data sound?
Major compulsory revisions:

Qualitative interviews are a rich source of data and I feel that the authors could draw more depth from their results. At present, the results section is very much
like a list of quotes, with little interpretation or analysis. More discussion around each theme would greatly enhance this paper.

The results are quite vague, generally using terminology such as “some participants expressed…” or “a group of participants expressed…” In a sample of 24 participants, terminology such as this does not give the reader a sense of how important these themes were to the sample as a whole. If appropriate, the number of people who discussed each theme should be included.

Outlying or disconfirming cases should be discussed.

How many people in total were invited to participate in the study (i.e. how many refused or withdrew)? What were reasons for choosing not to participate?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   The discussion and conclusions are currently well balanced and supported by the data, however more depth may be possible if greater detail is added into the results and methods.
   As participants were drawn from only one country (Taiwan), it may not be appropriate to generalise results to all Asian countries. (discretionary revision)

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   At present only one limitation is acknowledged. Depending on the methods employed, further limitations may be relevant (for example, if only one person rated the interviews, the data may be subject to bias, etc.).

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes, the Introduction and Discussion are well-grounded in existing literature, and the authors clearly state that this work builds upon existing research in Western samples.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes, the title and abstract give a good summary of the findings. The authors may want to consider changing the word “actual” to “actually” in the title (i.e. “…protective factors of actually executing suicide…”). (discretionary revision)

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes, the paper is well written.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests