Reviewer’s report

Title: An Investigation of Physical and Mental Health Consequences among Chinese Parents Who Lost Their Only Child

Version: 2 Date: 24 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Eva Bergsträsser

Reviewer’s report:

The authors worked intensively on this manuscript which covers an important field of palliative care and grief. The manuscript has improved significantly; however, several revisions have still to be done.

Abstract

Line 39-42 "The rate of PTSD in the Shidu group was up to 32.6% and the scores of PCL-C are much higher than the control group." - Instead of PCL-C are much higher, it should be were much higher

Line 59 "More studies and support are desired to improve the physical and mental" - Why not more clear - your study already provides significant results to start working on a concept which should be considered in the Chinese one-child-only policy. The discussion provides several sentences which are much more concise and focused, and would thus fit much better.

Introduction

Page 5, line 12 - there is a misspelling: it should be 'their' young children.

Page 6, line 4 - "Therefore, Chinese government has been aware of the importance of providing support for Shidu parents." - This is surprising as in the preceding and following text, the authors argue that the Chinese government should be more aware and supportive …

Methods

Page 6/7, starting line 57: "A household survey was also administered to the Shidu parents, which took approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Some participants became emotional during the investigation, we had to pause the investigation to comfort them, thus the entire investigation process can take 1- 2 hours." - A survey was administered ('also' can be omitted). The second sentence should start with something like 'As some participants…' otherwise the junction is not correct. Following it should be 'could' instead of can take…The following
sentences (to line 17) with the recruitment letter should be placed before the setting and how the intervention was performed, including pauses. And, as mentioned in the first review - the recruitment letter is different to the study information and informed consent - this needs clarification. - Please provide a structure which describes the process; otherwise, the reader has difficulties to follow.

The criteria for the target group are listed below:

Line 42; point 2: instead of completed it should be 'complete'

Line 55-57: Could be re-worded: We aimed at same sample sizes for the target group and the control group and equally distributed gender, age and family incomes.


Page 9 line 29 and following: "common chronic diseases, including hypertension, coronary heart disease, diabetes mellitus, cerebrovascular diseases (such as cerebral stroke, congestion and hemorrhage), diseases of digestive system (such as chronic gastritis, enteritis, hepatitis, cholecystitis, gall-stone, and polypus) and respiratory system (such as chronic bronchitis, pneumonectasis, asthma and tuberculosis), rheumatism (such as Arheumatic condition,pain,join), osteoarthropathy (such as hypertrophic, tuberculous and retromorphosis), tumor, mental illnesses and so on." - This list does not make sense - please shorten and revise. Choose only diseases which have an impact on the health condition of a parent (e.g. a gall stone may or may not make any problems). Spelling is incorrect and diagnoses are not presented in a correct professional terminology. Please refer to the corresponding table.

Page 10, line 1-6. "To maintain the same sample size as the target group, 100 families were selected as the control group from the 11 communities, and 97 questionnaires were collected." - This phrasing is complicated, please revise

Results

Page 11, line 10 "and so on" can be deleted.

Besides the general comment below concerning the way of writing, this section is precise and clear.

Discussion

I like the discussion as it is.

Page 13, line 50 and following -"… poor health condition and symptoms of PTSD were more likely to be observed among the Shidu group even though the Shidu group are wealthier and
younger than their counterparts." - Please revise the misspelling symptoms and instead of are wealthier it should be was wealthier.

Page 13, line 56 - "However, the differences didn't impact the results in a significant way, instead that indirectly supported our attribution of sever experience of losing the only child mainly.. " This sentence needs some revision and it should be did not instead of didn't.

Last sentence - "More studies can be beneficial to address the factors leading to the differences between the Shidu parents and the parents with a living child." - Why? Why not implementing interventions which might improve the situation of Shidu parents?

Conclusion

Page 14, line 14 - "than their counterparts who have a living child. Losing the only child is the most traumatic event for senior parents who cannot conceive" - I would prefer - who can no longer conceive

The whole text needs a further proof reading with a particular eye on spelling, tempi, use of spaces, hyphen (t-test), and use of italics (e.g. p).

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

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I am able to assess the statistics

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