Reviewer’s report

Title: The care.data consensus? A qualitative analysis of opinions expressed on Twitter

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Reviewer: Tom H van de Belt

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for allowing me to review this manuscript entitled “The care data consensus? A qualitative analysis of opinions expressed on Twitter”. This manuscript is well-written and the topic is relevant for the research community. There are some methodological issues that need to be resolved before this work is suitable for publication in BMC Public Health. Please find my suggestions below.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1) As with any other scientific research project, it is important to provide a clear research question. This will allow the reader to know what to expect. Since this work lacks a clear research question (at least it is not provided in the introduction), I am confused about the goal of this work. Did the authors (1) aim to investigate the feasibility of using the social network Twitter to collect opinions OR (2) did they assume that it already is a feasible tool and did they aim to provide an overview of different opinions of the Twitter community / general public? If 1: I would expect them to provide more results regarding feasibility and discuss more limitations in more detail (discussion) If 2: I would expect them to provide more evidence supporting that Twitter can be used for this purpose (there is are recent studies available, not only about twitter but also about social media in general), cause there is an intense discussion about it in the academic literature. Therefore, I advise the authors to add a research question and clearly choose between 1 or 2.

2) Second, I have a question about the methods used in this study. The authors used established methods of qualitative data analysis, which seems to be an acceptable solution. However, key in this methodology is that two reviewers independently code data, and discuss results until consensus is reached. I am aware that in some cases it accepted that only one author codes data, but then it should be clear that their level of agreement is very good to excellent. How was this done in the present study? I assume that the reviewers discussed differences and results. Please describe this as clearly as possible in a way it allows other researchers to reproduce equal results.

3) A third issue is related to the results section. The authors tend to quantify results e.g. ‘a very small number of people’, ‘a sizable proportion’ etc. This doesn’t make any sense thus should be avoided. I suggest that they provide it as
follows: ‘% (n/n)’. However, one can question the value of numbers/proportions for this work since this is a qualitative study with the goal to identify a variety if topics/opinions. If proportions matter it would be better to disseminate a survey OR they could at least include the number of retweets as well cause this is a way to echo a persons thoughts and can reflect your own opinion (probably a good next step)?

4) In the discussion section, the authors provide new results. This should be avoided. Please transfer to results section or remove.

5) The authors should clearly discuss all limitations of this work. I recommend a comparison to other sources such as other social media channels (there was a lot of debate about #caredata on Facebook), surveys, interviews, etc. Furthermore, it is clear that the very large majority of the individuals it concerns are not on Twitter. I am also interested in the limitations of NCapture in combination with NVivo 10: The number of tweets seemed to vary a lot? Did the authors compare the performance with other tools? Eg: there is an abundance of social media monitoring tools. If so, they could also describe this in the methods section. If they did not, I see this as an important limitation. Regarding their analysis, I would like to hear their thoughts about not including retweets since they drastically improve the reach of a tweet and when a tweet gets retweeted: it is clear that more people support it OR disagree with it.

- Minor Essential Revisions
  none

- Discretionary Revisions
  none

**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