Reviewer’s report

Title: Social workers' involvement in advance care planning: a systematic narrative review

Version: 1 Date: 05 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Brian Taylor

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer Comments for resubmission to BMC Palliative Care 05 June 2017 of: Social workers' involvement in advance care planning: a systematic review of peer-reviewed publications.

The title of the manuscript has been modified appropriately. This paper remains sufficiently original and relates to a useful context. The literature search method is now explained more clearly with the search operators included. Presumably truncations of the given terms were also included, and this should be indicated.

The wording regarding non-research publications has been clarified. The meaning of the term 'descriptive studies' is now clearer with the added phrase: 'both descriptive and interventional studies'. The issue of quality appraisal of items that were not published in a peer-reviewed journal is clarified. Classification of studies that addressed more than one theme is clarified. There is now a useful summary of the country of origin of studies. Literature reviews are now described as 'excluded documents'. If this is all the attention that previous reviews were given then it needs to be acknowledged as limitations of this review that it is not clear why this review is worth carrying out if there are existing literature reviews, and (2) that the included literature of these literature reviews was not considered. Previous relevant literature reviews should be cited in the paper in some appropriate context.

Despite the citation, the sentence: 'The introduction of advance communication related to EoL care was formalized in the UK through the Mental Capacity Act in 2007 [54]' (P 41 L 18) is factually incorrect and needs to be corrected. As in my previous review comments, firstly there is no Mental Capacity Act applying to the whole of the UK, and secondly the MCA for England and Wales is dated 2005.

The wording regarding the limitations of the review is much improved. The wording in the abstract and in the manuscript in general is much improved, and I am pleased to see abbreviations removed from the abstract.

In summary:

1. the description of the Mental Capacity Act in England and Wales needs to be corrected;
2. the methodology should be clarified by adding a phrase relating to truncation of terms; and

3. in the methods section previous relevant literature reviews should be cited to give this paper context, together with a brief explanation as to why this review is justified (presumably because of the scope in terms of the social work profession, as outlined in the Discussion section).

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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