Reviewer’s report

Title: The provision of generalist and specialist palliative care for patients with non-malignant respiratory disease in the North and Republic of Ireland: a qualitative study

Version: 0 Date: 18 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Mary Roberts

Reviewer's report:

Congratulations on a very timely examination of palliative care for patients with non-malignant respiratory disease.

The paper described a very important clinical issue and was clearly defined.

The research methodology was solid.

Subject selection had some bias. Only carers and health care professional opinions were sort. Out of the 17 carers, 7 did not live with the patient so their insight may have been limited.

You identified limitations including that only one carer of a patient with bronchiectasis was interviewed so it is difficult to assume data saturation for that patient group and conclusions about this group should be made with caution.

Another limitation was the narrow variety of health care professionals so data collected may also be biased and you have highlighted this. Once again, however, drawing conclusions about healthcare professionals as a whole should also be made with caution. A major limitation that was acknowledged, was that patients were not interviewed to ascertain their perspective. Do carers always have the same opinion as patients?

I think to strengthen the paper - it would be beneficial to identify the perspective you are coming from (palliative care / respiratory / medical / nursing / allied health) to assist the reader in evaluating your perceptions, interpretation and conclusions.
Data collection methods were well described and detailed for the carer group however, more details regarding how the focus group was run (mix of participants in each group, years of practice, any rules or instructions etc) would strengthen the data collection methodology and enable the study to be reproduced more accurately.

Data analysis was well described however quality control is not well described. To strengthen this part of the paper, a description and an explanation of critical dialogue between the researchers/authors and how any disagreements regarding themes were resolved should be included.

Results are credible however, more validating quotations would strengthen this section. Citing one quote per theme does not allow the reader to evaluate the researchers interpretation of the data as a whole. Adding one or two more key quotes would strengthen this section (accepting that word count may be a limiting factor).

The discussion highlights important issues and raises some interesting points. However it was unclear to the international reader, what the role of each service is, (Specialist Respiratory service, Generalist Palliative Care and Specialist Palliative Care) and what differences exist in the care they provide. This limits the transferability of the results to other settings.

The model developed based on your findings is interesting and would be great to explore the role of each specialty and level with the various disease groups in future studies, with possibly more focus on bronchiectasis as the data remains limited.

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.

No

**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:

Acceptable

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