Reviewer's report

Title: Socio-cultural contexts of end-of-life conversations and decisions: bereaved family cancer caregivers' retrospective co-constructions

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jul 2016

Reviewer: Lorraine Holtslander

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed original, important and well defined?

The authors have described an important research topic, addressing conversations regarding end of life with a sample of bereaved family caregivers in Kenya. However, the findings were not as clearly defined within the context of where the research took place. More attention to the context, perhaps in its own section, including the services and supports available, as a key finding would provide an important addition to the literature in this area.

2. Are the data sound and well controlled?

More information needs to be provided about the data collection procedures. Recruitment is described as through snowball sampling of personal contacts and referrals. How did the authors themselves have this access? More about the role of the researchers is needed, especially since you have ethics from South Africa but conducted the study in Kenya. More about the research process is needed, such as obtaining of consent, recording of focus groups, questions asked at the group interviews and the location of the interviews.

3. Is the interpretation (discussion and conclusion) well balanced and supported by the data?

On page 6 you state that 2 end of life themes are presented. Did other themes also emerge? If so, you could position these results within the overall study findings. The interpretations were a little confusing, especially the terms used such as advanced directives, which seemed to be considered the same as "wills". These are 2 different concepts in our North American context. Wills are often used to address financial aspects whereas advanced directives deal with decisions for end of life. Please clarify and use consistent terminology.

What is the main overall finding? How do the 2 themes relate to each other? Were there other findings? Were the perspectives of the "professionals" different from the family groups? The name of the first theme was really interesting, and explains this complex concept well. It was
described in the Kenyan context, which was very well done. The discussion section was well done and findings are compared to other research.

4. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to allow others to evaluate and/or replicate the work?

Yes, the methods are appropriate but need more explanation, as in point 2, they need to be more clearly described.

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methods?

Adding more detail to the process of data collection and the researcher role would improve the section on methods.

6. Can the writing, organization, tables and figures be improved?

The writing is overall very good and the manuscript as a whole well-organized. A section on the implications of these findings for practice and research is needed, specifically in the Kenyan context.

7. When revisions are requested.

Revisions are needed to the methodology section and to further organize the findings section which would add to the overall coherence of the paper.

8. Are there any ethical or competing interests issues you would like to raise?

There is mention of ethics approval but more detail is needed on the consent process, especially since the research was conducted in a neighbouring country from where the ethics was obtained.

Thanks for this opportunity to review this very important and interesting research.
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.

No

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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