Reviewer’s report

Title: What are families most grateful for after receiving palliative care? Content analysis of written documents received: a chance to improve the quality of care.

Version: 0 Date: 13 Oct 2016

Reviewer: Barbara Jack

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors, thank you for submitting this paper which has been an interesting read. There are several points that I feel need to be addressed before it can be accepted for the journal

a) Use of the abbreviation PC - this in the UK means politically correct so I would suggest change to in full

b) Some of the font is in read - I am unsure why?

c) Literature re Hospice at Home services: there are several key UK papers that report the value of HAH services and these would be useful to include (refs below- including some recent studies I have been involved with - suggestions only, but would strengthen the paper)

d) Also the authors need to look at the literature regarding when a home death can be achieved (some eg are noted below)

e) The authors need to provide more details of their service, what it provides etc - so the reader can get a better understanding of it - what services did the families also have - more description needed

f) Section lines 82-96 I am not sure if this adds to the paper

g) Methodology; this section needs to be developed and include references regarding this approach and key texts such as Bowen. Also refer to examples of when this approach has been used before

h) Presentation of the quotes: although the identifiers of the abbreviation are at the end of the document it was not clear what they were until then. With the use of letters in newspapers - how confident are you that these were not altered at the point of publication?

i) Data: you report on 78/130 potential 'cases', how many of the letters and Christmas cards were from the same family? Also what about multiple family members sending in
letters/cards - were the authors able to link these to the patients case - This could be made clearer in the paper

If the authors could address the above points than I think the paper will be stronger and worthy of publication. NB Please note the international readership of the journal and need to suggest what can be shared to a wider international population where palliative care services are being developed

Refs
Supporting older people with cancer and life-limiting conditions dying at home: a qualitative study of patient and family caregiver experiences of Hospice at Home care.  
Jack BA, Mitchell TK, Cope LC, O'Brien MR.  

Supporting family carers providing end-of-life home care: a qualitative study on the impact of a hospice at home service.  
Jack BA, O'Brien MR, Scrutton J, Baldry CR, Groves KE.  

Supporting home care for the dying: an evaluation of healthcare professionals' perspectives of an individually tailored hospice at home service.  
Jack BA, Baldry CR, Groves KE, Whelan A, Sephton J, Gaunt K.  


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.
Unable to assess

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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