Reviewer’s report

Title: Animal-Assisted Therapy at a University Center for Palliative Medicine - a Retrospective Qualitative and Quantitative Observational Study

Version: 1  Date: 31 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Sofia Zambrano Ramos

Reviewer's report:

I am very pleased with the new manuscript and with the way in which the authors incorporated the initial feedback from all reviewers.

I commend the authors for their careful attention to detail after the many different suggestions to improve their manuscript.

I have now only four final recommendations/observations:

1. On page 7. Last line, "we followed Mayring's model of qualitative content analysis" should be deleted since it is already stated in the sentence before.

2. On page 12, in the first paragraph of the Discussion, the authors present new information about the reasons why most patients only participated once of the Animal therapy sessions. I think this information should be presented first in the results, in the AAT characteristics subheading, and be only briefly discussed in the Discussion section.

3. Please organise Table 4 in the same thematic order as the results section.

4. The results pointing to Table 4 were not updated, for example Line 92 on Page 9 states "this is described in detail in Table 4". However, now that you have shortened this table, some of this information is not there anymore, perhaps you could provide more textual information, instead of referring to Table 4. This is again evidenced in the last Theme, where the criteria for discontinuation is not clear anymore from Table 4, and which could also be easily summarized in the text on that section.

Other than my comments above, I would be very glad to see the paper published in BMC Palliative Care.

Thank you for your contribution!
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.

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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