Reviewer’s report

Title: Palliative and end-of-life care research in Scotland 2006-2015: A systematic scoping review

Version: 0 Date: 14 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Sandra Martins Pereira

Reviewer's report:

This is a methodologically well conducted manuscript that focuses on a relevant topic: palliative and end of life care research. The inclusion of research in the strategic frameworks for palliative development is indeed of foremost relevance, reason why this manuscript can have an international impact. The study is carefully conducted. Nevertheless, in my opinion, a few minor essential revisions are needed to improve its overall quality and international relevance.

1. Abstract: Please, specify the methods and study design in the "Methods". Also, the conclusion is rather long, especially when compared to the results section. In the conclusion, the authors refer to an earlier Scottish review; when was this earlier review conducted? Please, mention the year.

2. Background:

Page 6, line 15. What were the main findings of this "unpublished review" that examined all palliative care research published over a decade? Since the background should give information on what is already known about the topic, it would be relevant and interesting to know the main findings of this previous review.

Very good and clear research questions!

3. Methods:

Page 9, line 2. Please, provide this information in a box.

Page 10, lines 1 and 5. Please, present the set of possible themes clearly.

4. Results:

In order to help the reader throughout the results section, please, provide subheadings aligned with the main research questions. Also, it would be interesting (and aligned with the methods of
a systematic scoping review) to have a figure presenting a "map" of the main results in a logical, diagrammatic or tabular form.

Page 10, lines 47 and 50. Since the inclusion criteria were stated already, it is a bit odd to state that some articles were excluded as they did not meet those inclusion criteria (e.g., focus on palliative care, no Scotland-based author). Any possible explanation on why these papers were yielded in the initial search and screening stage?

Page 12, line 18. For the discussion, it would be interesting to have a possible explanation on why "nearly half of the papers did not specify their focus".

Page 14, Table 1. Why did the authors choose to present this table as part of the results? Why is this detailed information so relevant to be presented in a table and further discussed in pages 21-22?

5. Discussion:

In general, all over this section, it would be interesting and relevant if the authors would frame and discuss their findings in light of the international readership of BMC Palliative Care.

Page 16, line 20. Any possible explanation for the under-representation of intervention-studies?

Page 17, line 45. It is indeed relevant that the SPICT has been translated into 8 languages and used in many countries. Any results and outcomes from this use? Considering the international impact that Scottish research may have and the international readership of palliative care, it would be interesting to have further information and detail on this matter.

Page 19, lines 20 to 42. While it is unquestionable that Scottish institutions and researchers have been leading international projects, once again, it would be relevant to have some more thorough information on the impact and implications of these projects. For instance, how did these Scottish studies influence the adoption of the WHO resolution?

Page 20, line 39. Any possible explanation for the relatively few research studies on end of life care for people with dementia?

Figures. Please, check if they comply with BMC Palliative Care guidelines as the quality of the resolution is rather low.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of reviewing such and interesting manuscript.
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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