Reviewer’s report

Title: "I Always Tried to Forget about the Condition and Pretend I was Healed": Coping with Cervical Cancer in Rural Ghana

Version: 1 Date: 24 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Elizabeth Namukwaya

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting manuscript on an issue that is important in palliative care practice in Africa. This will be of interest to palliative care providers, oncologists and social workers in Africa.

There are some revisions that could make this manuscript better and stronger.

1. In the abstract please add where ethical permission to conduct the study was obtained in the methods section

2. Methods: it will be easier to read if it is more structured by including subheadings e.g study setting, sampling analysis etc.

   please describe how sample size was determined and method of sampling was it purposive, was thematic saturation achieved?

   Interviews were done in the local languages but there is no mention of translating the data, what was done first transcribing or translating?

   explain or define what you mean by those who had survived the disease line 82 and also give your operational definition of early disease which is referred to on line 91.

   the themes mentioned in lines 116-119 should be written under results section.

3. Results: I suggest a table for background characteristics and less text, it is much easier to read.

   I suggest that you give subthemes as subheadings under the main themes e.g personal coping strategies: psychological coping strategies, abstince form sex etc then go on to explain each. It will be easier to follow and reduce repetitions.
In the results section it is not well explained how people used health seeking as a coping mechanism please explain more.

4. Discussion: In the discussion, the implication on line 328 that men will have extramarital affairs is not deduced from this research, are there studies from elsewhere with similar findings of abstinence.

Social support was found to be important for coping. Can you make suggestions about this on implications for care/health education in the discussion. Also people relied on faith for coping and this may also be an important implication for care by working with faith leaders. Suggest adding in discussion.

I suggest you read Bury's article, this is the reference: BURY, M. (1991) The sociology of chronic illness: a review of research and prospects. Sociology of Health & Illness, 13, 451-468 where he talks of coping, strategy and style, it will help you with the discussion.

5. Give some limitations of the study and suggest areas for future research

6. Statement of availability of data: Is it possible to have included data generated in this manuscript.

7. There are some grammatical and punctuation errors, also repetitions.

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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