Reviewer’s report

Title: The second patient? Family members of cancer patients and their role in end-of-life decision making

Version: 0 Date: 21 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Sandra Bradley

Reviewer's report:

Overall, it is an interesting paper with relevant findings. However, the authors don't describe the type of grounded theory methodology they used or produce evidence that the way they have used GT in analysis is consistent with the type that they used. For example, was it classical GT or constructivist GT? From the way that the coding was done, it suggests it was classical, but there is no evidence of codes, categories and how these were combined into the themes presented. There was no indication of the various aspects of rigour that are required: credibility, transparency, usefulness, analysability. The abstract does not provide the themes in a manner that indicates these are themes.

Line 24, p. 6 - "about half?" - use specific information

Line 29, p. 6 - "could show?" - did Nolan et al. show this or not? How was it shown?

Throughout, there are mistakes in the use of English language and this manuscript would have benefited from editing with someone who had English grammar expertise.

Lines 36-41, p. 6 - in what way? A bold statement such as this needs examples.

Lines 12 - 15, P. 7 - need to detail which studies, not just by ref#

Lines 24-34, p. 7 - too much subjective language without evidence

Lines 41-46, p. 7 - incorrect grammar - which GT method?

p. 8 - there should be an example of the interview guide

P. 8 - there should be an example of the sampling strategy

Without the examples it is difficult to know if you have done these stages properly

Line 46, p. 8 - grammar error

Line 49, p. 8 - grammar error
Lines 7-12, p. 9 - Why did you use these in relation to the interviews? Relate the need to do this back to the method of analysis. For example, were you comparing the cohort information to the interview analyses to look for areas of similarities or differences? If so, say so.

P. 9 - see comments at beginning about what is needed to establish rigor.

Results, p. 9 - what were the categories? How many codes were there? What themes emerged from the categories? A table could indicate all of this. This section also requires subheadings.

At the end of each section in results it is preferable to have a summary sentence, not end with a quotation.

The two quotes on p. 11, lines 19-32 say the same thing - only one is necessary

Lines 34-40, P. 13 - what legal requirement? Name the Act under which oncologists are complying.

Lines 29-31, p. 16 - recommendations should be produced at the end of the Discussion section under a subheading.

Lines 41-46 - needs reference

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.

No

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:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.