Reviewer’s report

Title: Palliative care for people with schizophrenia: a qualitative study of an under-serviced group in need

Version: 0 Date: 22 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Marie Jose Gijsberts

Reviewer’s report:

Abstract: This study aims to address the paucity of research in this by documenting possible need, experiences of health care service use and factors affecting palliative care use for people with schizophrenia and advanced life limiting illness.

Introduction:

The problem the authors aim to address is clearly described, also the available knowledge in literature is adequately laid out.

The purpose of the study is adequately described.

Method:

A qualitative study method is appropriate given the paucity of evidence at this moment

Given the patient population it is justifiable to perform the study with health care providers that are experienced in caring for the study population instead of the vulnerable patients themselves, and a purposive sampling strategy is adequate.

It is not clear to me what the authors mean by a 'normative need' perspective, and why it is important to mention this. The description of the main themes in this section mentioned in this section is more clarifying for me, and relate adequately to the research question

A focus group with 3 participants is mentioned, the method section initially only mentioned the interviews, for me, this is methodologically confusing: why a focus group? How does this relate to the interviews? Were the participants also interviewed? Why only 3 participants, which is a very small number? Nothing is written about the themes that were explored in the focus group. How many sessions, only one?

Analysis: The method to analyze the data is appropriate.

Ethical approval was granted
Results:

The way the emerging themes are organized in the results 'echo' the structure of the questionnaire, the process of thematic labelling and synthesizing them to main themes may show that the structure of the questionnaire was not 'leading'.

The results could be structured 'tighter in themes with headings, making them more results than mere descriptions.

The examples that illustrate the themes are not always very strong and may be reconsidered.

The way the section 'barriers and facilitators' is described and organized in a table is a strong addition.

Discussion:

This section starts with a good resume of the previous sections, and the findings are adequately related to those in other publications. The challenges of providing palliative care to these patients, specifically illness related challenges and social factors may be important to colleagues in other countries with different health systems.

The advocacy for collaboration and creative approaches is adequately concluded.

Limitations:

As stated before, a table on characteristics of participants would enlighten the mentioned limitations in this section.

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.

No

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

**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/](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