Reviewer’s report

Title: Striving for a balance between leading and following the patient and family - nurses' strategies to facilitate the transition from life-prolonging care to palliative care: an interview study

Version: 0 Date: 23 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Donna Wilson

Reviewer's report:

This is an important, novel, and needed study on how a key member of the health care team, the RN, facilitates the shift from cure oriented care to palliative or end of life care. More of these types of studies are needed, as the important role of the RN is often missed.

I have no issues with the methods used to gather and analyze the data, but I believe some revision is needed to help the reader understand and value this study report. Specifically:

1. The first three paragraphs in particular and the following three as well, need to be revised for increased clarity, and with more references used to substantiate the points made about how palliative care has progressed over the years (if that point actually needs to be said) and why this transition from curative to palliative or end of life care is problematic or difficult. Moreover, what is a breaking point? Please describe it. Please also consider that this transition to PC could be sudden or it could slowly evolved over a number of years where the disease progressed and people come to realize that a health decline to death is occurring. So please clarify if you are only talking about sudden changes in health with a breaking point or all transitions to PC. Patients in PC units tend to be the most symptomatic, and they also tend to be the ones who have had a sudden serious decline in health. So - please reconsider how in the strengths and limitations section if this study has any transferability outside of PC units.

2. Please insert the name of the author of published articles that you are referring to, instead of a number for that article.

3. Please comment on the hospital, PC unit, usual RN role, and health care system in Sweden, as this context could influence PC and also the role of RNs.

4. Please also consider revising the conclusion to more clearly state the key findings and what readers should take away as last thoughts.

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

Declaration of competing interests
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