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: 16 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Jayne Brown

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for letting me read this interesting article which I think makes some interesting points but that requires revision for clarification.

Use of language: Generally the level of English is very high in this article which means that it is quite obvious when changes need to be made. This is needed to ensure clarity for the reader. Although the sub-headings make sense I found that the content under each sometimes badly organised and a little repetitive - the authors need to give some attention to ordering of content in the paper. More specific comments are made below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>'Analysed with' should read analysed using</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>Use of the term 'breakpoint' this is not a term I recognise and would like the authors to give a definition to assist other readers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Last sentence before the 'key words' is not clear and needs re-drafting</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>The idea of a 'safe phase' needs further exploration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>The referencing is inconsistent sometimes names appear in the text where a number would of sufficed and other times the numbers assigned to references are used where a name should be e.g p3 line 49. Look at the way other authors have dealt with this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Explain what you mean by existential crisis</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>'Existential talks' is a strange phrase and unclear in its meaning I suggest it needs changing</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>The summary 2nd sentence. It is suggested that this has been discussed above but phasing out of curative care and early establishment of palliative care is not in fact discussed in the paragraphs above.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
From what you have said about sampling from line 8 onwards it is evident you have not used strategic variation sampling but purposive sampling and this needs reflecting in the text

Sentence beginning 'it was strived' is phrased badly and needs rewriting

As above please rephrase

As above

Sentence beginning 'sometimes, however, the family' how did participants deal with families who were in denial?

Who was the support given to?

This section of text belongs to the previous section 'getting to know the patient'

Sentence beginning The RN said needs rephrasing

Quote in wrong place and need moving to the gap in the paragraph above, sentence ending 'with the patient or with the family'

Needs rephrasing

Quote is not helpful

These two sentences follow each other but are not linked well

Sentence beginning 'According to the RN's...' needs rephrasing

'Apprehended' is not the right word here? try understood

Being clear about the routines is not adapting the individual needs you need to unpick this paradox

Give an example of the distraction used

Sentence should begin with 'participants discussed how.....' and the sentence needs rephrasing

Does not make sense

Needs rephrasing
'blunt' inappropriate word try 'honest'
Sentence beginning 'this may requirements,, needs rephrasing
Last sentence on page . Explain further
Hope can be described as …. Needs a reference
What is an existential conversation

Table 1
I was not convinced by the example of analysis given in table 1. This could have been because the translation into the English took away some of the meaning of the text - so perhaps the use of the word 'decision' was not appropriate here. The meaning unit to me indicated that the nurse strived to be honest with the patient, but also was making a decision about what information they thought the patient needed / wanted ( - which would temper the ability of the nurse to be honest perhaps)

Importantly that the patient really 'controls a lot' and I took that to mean that they control the amount of disclosure and honesty - not that the patient take a lot of decisions as suggested in the condensed meaning unit

So from what I read the first 2 codes were appropriate but the final one should perhaps of been
Patients controls the flow and or content of the information from the nurse.

Now of course I may be completely wrong here but as it stands the use of English in the table does not reflect what is presented and this need to be addressed

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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