Reviewer’s report

Title: How to conserve dignity in palliative care: Suggestions from older patients, significant others, and health care professionals in Swedish municipal care

Version: 0 Date: 29 Jun 2018

Reviewer: Anne Finucane

Reviewer's report:

Overall this is an interesting paper. However, the methods are not clearly described, and the results section lacks any quotations (evidence). It is also a little unclear whether participants had any experience of DCI or whether they had participated in a DCI intervention as part of this study. The topic is timely so I would consider this for publication, but only following major revisions.

Abstract:
* Please state the number of patient, SO and HCPs recruited.
* Please clarify whether participants were interviewed about an intervention they received, or whether they were interviewed about their thoughts on a Swedish version of the DCI that is being planned.

Intro
* Please say something more about how the DCI is operationalised (eg in Scotland where it has been used.
* Please elaborate on how the DCI enables patients to engage in dialogue with community nurses about important issues they might not raise (P4, line 86). It is unclear to a reader who is unfamiliar with the DCI.
* A DCI intervention has also been conducted in Ireland and may be of interest to mention given the international audience for this journal.
* How long does the DCI take?
* Please clarify the aim of the study - did participants undergo the DCI, or were they only interviewed about the DCI and what might be relevant in a Swedish context?

Methods
* Please provide more detail on participant recruitment, perhaps a separate heading in the methods section. Also state the type of sample (convenience, purposive, other).
* The description of the Chochinov model is better placed in the Intro.
* Actual participant numbers are better placed in the results section - Characteristics of participants. See below.
* Please include a section on ethical approval and research governance. What permissions were sought/obtained and from where?
Please include a note on the interviewers, training, experience and relationship to participants (were they known to the participants).

Please review the COREQ guidelines to improve reporting of this study. See: https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article/19/6/349/1791966

Results

There is a much greater need for clarity in this section. How many interviews and focus groups were conducted? What was the total sample size? (The reader can get this by adding up the various numbers, but the total sample number should be clearly stated. A table with the following would be useful or HCPS: HCP number/role/years experience/Focus group number. Also for patients and SOs: Participant type (Patient/SO)/ Age/ Diagnosis of patient or cared for person/ Location interviewed.

The small number of patient participants (n=3) is a weakness and should be acknowledged in the discussion. While the focus is on conserving patient dignity, most of the suggestions are from significant others and healthcare professionals. It is hard to recruit palliative patients in general, so this is not unusual, however it should be acknowledged in particular given the focus of the study (under study limitations)

It is most unusual to conduct a qualitative study, but to provide no evidence (quotations) in the results section. Please review and provide support for the findings using evidence taken from the transcripts.

Discussion

Please be more explicit in relation to how the findings complement, differ from and extend previous studies? Concrete examples would be interesting.

P22, line 512: typo

A previous "review of Swedish evidence" is mentioned - please state what the key findings were.

Much of the discussion describes good person centred care, which is a healthcare priority in many countries (e.g. http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/person-centred_care/person-centred_programme.aspx) How does the DCI enhance good practice that may already be occurring in many palliative care settings?

Can you identify directions for future research?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

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.

Unable to assess

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

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