Reviewer’s report

Title: A pattern language of compassion in intensive care and palliative care contexts

Version: 1 Date: 15 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Philip Larkin

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

This is a really interesting paper and provides a perspective on compassion that adds to our understanding of the concept. Overall, the paper is quite well written, although sometimes the language is distracting in terms of making judgements which are not always clear in the context of the paper. For example, the sentence on line 22, page 22 regarding 'attunement' is not clear to me so I am unable to assess its importance.

I have one or two other comments that I think need to be addressed. Some sentence structure is rather dense.

1. It seems you have used a very eclectic approach to constructivist grounded theory, incorporating a range of other methodological approaches, the reason for which is not entirely clear. The process of data analysis is not really addressed in the paper and so these things together mean that I think you need a stronger argument for the evidence on constructivist Grounded Theory as to your decision to incorporate these other approaches and how analysis was utilized.

2. I accept that with a small sample, you do need to respect anonymity. However, it would be best practice in qualitative research that some indicator to show different respondent perspectives here is included, even if it a a numeric indicator (PY 2). You know who that is, I don't, but it means that I can see you are presenting from the full range of your sample and not just selective quotes from 1 or 2.

3. The importance of the fact that the palliative care texts were longer and its implication in relation to the ICU texts is not entirely clear. Is there a supposition to be made here?

4. I wonder if the key points for decision-makers need to reflect more the translation of theory to practice than are currently proposed. I feel these could be revised to make a stronger argument for how compassion in practice can and should be made more explicit.

5. I think one or two references in the reference list may need a final check that nothing is missing?

I do like this paper and I hope my proposals will help improve the paper for publication.
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.
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

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
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