Reviewer’s report

Title: Cultural Safety Strategies for Rural Indigenous Palliative Care: A Scoping Review

Version: 1 Date: 27 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Sandra K. Richardson

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript - the topic is one of continuing relevance within healthcare, and you offer a thoughtful review of the materials identified in your project. You have provided an effective background and contextual section, however this is to some extent at the cost of your study design and process. While you have clearly clarified the objectives and intent of this study, the definition of your process (a scoping review) and the elements included in this are not always well established. In relation to the overview provided as an introduction to the topic as a whole, you have introduced several aspects / statements of interest. You note the tendency (p4 l.17) for palliative care scholarship to retain some negative approaches, including "individual conceptualizations of culture" which you link to culture competency rather than cultural safety. This is debatable, particularly given the original emergence of the concept of cultural safety (cs) as a response to individual experiences and its focus on recognising and valuing the individual interpretation of culture as well as the broad and often stereotypical conceptual views of cultural groups. In line with this, you note the difficulty in defining the concept of CS and its lack of clarity, yet seem comfortable in assessing its presence/absence despite this. A more common issue has been that while CS is often defined in fairly similar terms (and differentiated from cultural awareness and cultural competence), that the difficulty lies in finding means to evaluate whether it is effectively occurring, given that it is something that only the recipient of the care or service can adequately determine, not those who are providing it. The issues that arise from the Canadian experience in transitioning to CS are identified, for example reference to 'colour blindness' and the desire to treat everyone equally. While you acknowledge later in the manuscript the arguments from the CS approach that specifically refute the value of this, I wonder if a clearer argument here might add to the impact? Including the acknowledgment that it is about equity and justice, not equality, and the risks associated with viewing the world from the dominant ethnocentric position and reinforcing the power differentials that result might be appropriate. I recognise that you do acknowledge these factors later in the article.

Looking to the process around the search strategy and review, it would be helpful for the reader to have an understanding as to how you defined 'rural and small town settings' in your search, and most importantly (given your stated concern around defining CS) what were the criteria you applied when determining the articles were indicative of "relevance to culturally-safe or competent approaches". Did you assess the included articles for quality in any way? what type of articles were these? ie all qualitative? if quantitative, what type of studies? How was the data extracted and synthesised?
The overall approach presents some interesting findings, although including the authors own description of their approach (ie did any of these claim to present a CS approach?) would be useful. Given the power of language, the way in which these studies identified the processes they used is potentially powerful and adds further to the understanding of the role and use of power in enacting CS approaches. While acknowledging that the principle focus of the article is on indigeneity and CS in relation to this, the culture of rurality does not come through strongly.

Please add some additional detail relating to the process. Overall I feel this is informative and adds to the field of knowledge around CS.

**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:

Acceptable

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