Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 31 Aug 2018

Reviewer: Sam Porter

Reviewer's report:

This was a stimulating and thought-provoking paper that I enjoyed reading. It raises a number of important issues in relation to palliative care for members of indigenous communities. I am very sympathetic with the position of the authors that a more historicised and structural approach to care needs to be taken on the grounds that exclusive concentration on the individual level is disempowering. However, I do have some concerns about the manner in which the argument has been constructed.

The objective of the paper is obscured by it being listed as a second objective of a wider study. The first objective is not reported on here. While it is perfectly appropriate to publish more than one paper from a study examining different angles of the study, it is important to concentrate on what this paper is about. Other information from the study can be included if needed as background, but the objectives included in a paper should be the objectives of the paper. The fact that the goals of the paper were placed incongruously in the middle of the background section (P4, line 11) did not help clarity.

There is a lack of definitional clarity about the main concepts in the paper - cultural competence and cultural safety, and also of cultural relevance. These should be defined at the outset. The crucial importance of cultural issues to palliative and end of life care could also be more clearly spelt out.

Also in relation to definition, while the authors state that they are conducting a scoping review, they provide no explanation of what their scoping approach involves and how it differs from other review methods. I feel that this ambiguity is reflected in the body of the paper, which seems to me to go beyond the normal remit of a review. In addition to listing approaches to palliative care under the two categories of cultural competence and cultural safety, the authors provide an ongoing commentary that is often lacking any substantiation from the literature. To take examples from just two pages, the following are vague though suggestive assertions that are made without any supporting citations: 'many scholars suggest that cultural competency essentializes racialized minorities (P17, line 1); 'A critique of these types of recommendations for culturally competent care is that they may be too prescriptive' (P18, line 1); 'a non-Indigenous clinician may benefit from some basic examples of ways that some Indigenous clients' may differ in their approach to death and dying from cultural norms that they are used to' (P18, line 7). If the paper is a polemic, then its assertions and arguments need to be backed up more strongly as they currently are. Moreover, it should be owned s such and not presented as a literature review. If it is a literature review, then it needs to present its results in a far more
objective manner, leaving discussion about the merits and demerits of what has been discovered to the discussion section.

In sum, I think the authors need to be clearer about the nature of the paper both to themselves and to the reader. I appreciate this may entail a lot of work in redrafting, but I would encourage the authors to do so because they have an important message that the palliative care community needs to hear.

**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

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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