Reviewer’s report

Title: An exploration of the conceptual understanding of Pediatric Palliative Care: A health care providers' perspective in Switzerland.

Version: 0 Date: 23 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer’s report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

Statistics - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

N/A - there are no statistics in this study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

No - there are minor issues

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?

Probably - with minor revisions
PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: Qualitative research of this nature can lead to greater understanding in this complex area where there is considerable subjectivity of opinions.

Methods are appropriate - "To facilitate qualitative analysis, all the discussions were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim in the language of the interview (German or French). Transcripts were returned to participants for revision."

Also, good practice of - "Three authors independently analyzed the transcribed data by reading the interviews several times" and similarly how they reached an agreement about the coding scheme.

29 people took part with good representation from the multi-disciplinary team, which is described as predominantly female but that this is representative of the workforce.

Quotations from participants appear in tables, which is different from other qualitative research papers, but perhaps this is a good thing and allows the reader to look at them as a whole.

Results and Discussion are well written and easy to follow.

There has been an appropriate review of the literature with 56 references provided / cited.

The limitations listed are appropriate and detailed and followed by an appropriate conclusion.

The study has ethics approval.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

The premise of this study is that "Studies exploring barriers to palliative care have focused especially on palliative care in adult health care. Fewer studies have focused on barriers to palliative care in pediatrics." Is this correct? I have written a paper on the subject, and there are many children's hospices. This may be the case in Switzerland, but is it worldwide? For this reason, Switzerland should be in the title, e.g., An exploration of the conceptual understanding of Pediatric Palliative Care: Health care providers' perspectives in Switzerland.

The statement - "As a result, many children do not benefit from pediatric palliative care (PPC) or at least not in a timely manner" - the same could also be argued for adult palliative care.

Methods - "$This study is part of a larger project on end-of-life decision-making in pediatric oncology" - have the other studies been published?

"Oral informed consent was sought from all participants prior to the start of the focus group."

Is it not usual to provide a written information sheet and have written consent for such a study?
ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

The paper concentrates on the term palliative care. Is it possible to add a sentence or short paragraph that includes details about end-of-life care, as some authors are using this phrase instead, synonymously or overlapping with? This is of interest, as another synonym might be of use. Although, given the arguments in the paper, this might not overcome initial barriers and could also have negative connotations. Is this a phrase used in Switzerland and French / German literature? Should reference be made in the literature review to such journals that are not in English as they might provide further insights?

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.

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.

No

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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Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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