Reviewer’s report

Title: Supporting carers: health care professionals in need of system improvements and education - a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 12 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Felicity Hasson

Reviewer's report:

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PCAR-D-18-00217R1

Overall, this is an interesting paper highlighting an integrative Norwegian model of palliative care however this paper focus on the HCP perceived support to carers.

Background: This section is very short and may miss some key information, i.e. definition of carer, policy relating to the carer, the Norwegian context of care within the international field. In addition, the introduction of the CSNAT tool in the background seems to sit out and would benefit from more integration - is this a tool used in Norway, if not what tools are used and why consider this as an option?

Methods:
Aim: Is the aim of the study to evaluate the HCP carers support in this model? Does the integrative model have a bearing on the support? Alternatively, does it make no difference? When was this model developed, how long has it been embedded, what interventions have been used to embed changes to HCPs? No data exists to illustrate a difference beforehand and the introduction, data collection and results do not focus on this.
Participants and setting: First, Reference to 13 municipalities is repeated in the paper and this may need some extra explanation. Second, Who are the HCPs and out of what number in total is the HCP population sampled? The lack of model information leaves this open to interpretation. Third, page 4 seems to report generic literature on carers and refers to the overall study aim. Fourth, the process of data collection would benefit from further clarification, who phoned/screened the HCPs? Fifth, (line 134) the issue of saturation was dealt with in an earlier section so may I suggest this is removed?
Table 1: The data collection seems to be 2 studies in one a) assessment tools and b) carer support with barriers and facilitators - however the influence of the model is not apparent.

Results:
In total 21 HCPs took part and this was out of how many approached?
Table 2: Please clarify - a secretary is a HCP?
A key issue in this paper (which is been noted in the results) is that the variability of the location in which HCPs practice and the roles in each of these clinical settings means that the carer support they can and do offer is variable. Again, the influence of the integrative model in the results seems to be missing - does this standardise the care? Some of the results section seems a repeat and could be refined for narrative flow. In addition, this is self-reported findings and based upon perceptions/ experience not fact this needs to be reflected in the results.

Line 210 - quote does not fit in the narrative flow and is a repeat of line 219
Line 2134 - unclear of relevance of quote
Line 229 - unclear of relevance of quote
Line 262 - how many of the 21 HCPs actually have used the CSNAT tool?
Line 305 - the presentation of this section (hampers) may benefit from some revision and reduction in length.

Discussion:
The papers aim is not reflected in the discussion (evaluation/ influence of the model in the support of carers).
The use and non-use of the CSNAT tool, which receives a lot of attention in the discussion, may relate more to cultural/ organisational and system issues which sit outside the scope of this paper. This section is very long and may benefit from some revision. What is the key message and what are the implications from this?

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.

No

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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