Reviewer’s report

Title: Development of an eHealth information resource for family carers supporting a person receiving palliative care on the island of Ireland.

Version: 0 Date: 14 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Matthew Allsop

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. You present a structured and evidence-based approach to the development of a website targeting caregivers of people with advanced disease. This included regularly seeking input from a reference group of patients, carers and professionals. There are a number of points I noted when reading the manuscript that I have outlined below. Some request further clarification around the methods and discussion sections and, for the discussion in particular, some request additional information to be included in a revision of the manuscript.

Background, line 12 - you highlight home-based palliative care services are now a policy goal in many countries. Please can you include relevant citations that suggest this is the case in Ireland or elsewhere?

Background - please expand on some of the challenges faced by policy makers and service planners in providing timely and efficient information? And does technology naturally lend itself to overcome some of these challenges?

Development process, line 48 - please provide more information about the specific roles of those involved. For example, is the palliative care expertise a clinician or researcher. Can you also indicate using author initials where contributors to the manuscript account for this expertise?

Development process - can you provide more details, and possibly examples, of how key insights were captured from the virtual reference group during development and how these were used to guide website development?

In the review of reviews, why were searches not made for literature describing existing online resources? This may have indicated which types of information are suitable for adaptation to an online format and where resources have been developed previously. It feels as though there is a missing step. Information needs identified in the literature may not necessarily lend themselves to being delivered via the internet, and where there is scope to adapt content in an online format, the way in which information is presented may also need to be considered. Existing literature describing online resource development may have been able to guide this process.
What was the justification for title only searching rather than screening both title and abstract at the same time? Please can you clarify why this approach was followed?

Please can you include a PRISMA flowchart and checklist alongside your submission? This is essentially a systematic review reported within the manuscript and would benefit from reporting using PRISMA. You have included a flow chart as Figure 1 but this, for example, does not include specifics about the different reasons for exclusion of articles during screening according to your selection criteria.

I am unclear on why you limited the search strategy to articles after the year 2000. You state that you want to capture current practice, but you are identifying information needs. Why would you assume that what caregivers need to know would have changed during this time? Further clarification would be helpful here.

What process did the professional and academic contacts use to identify additional published reviews? Their role should be included in the flowchart in Figure 1. If they did identify further articles I would question the quality of the search strategy used. It would have been useful to engage this group during the development of the search strategy to test whether your searching is identifying papers the contacts are aware of, to validate your searching.

I am not clear on the process for deriving the 'core' information from the systematic reviews. Are you able to add more detail around how agreement was determined and themes derived? I also do not get a sense of the magnitude to which different core themes are represented across the literature.

'VRG' abbreviation used in last sentence before 'Phase 2. Development of content' section, but has not been defined by this point.

During phase 2, were audio recordings used after the discussions? You mention that recordings were made to ensure an accurate record of the conversation but it is unclear how these were used by the team or if they were necessary.

Website development - is the web design specialist in the author list and if so can their initials be included when describing the role? If not, what is their background and what qualified their involvement in the study?

The description of methods becomes very loose when describing comparison with other websites. For example, 'face validity type approach' - did you assess face validity? 'Based on criteria such as…' - why do you not list all criteria?

Discussion, line 41 - can you cite international standards that mandate the need for sufficient information for carers?
Discussion, line 57 - what is the evidence for a lack of evidence-based resources for family carers of people with advanced disease? Did you demonstrate this in your own study or is there a citation you could include?

Discussion, line 11 - what are the implications of the content of the review being of low quality given that they have guided the development of content for your website? Can you be confident that your website is providing information that is going to broadly be of value to users beyond your VRG?

Generally, I feel that the discussion section requires expansion. Whilst the website in intended for Ireland, there is limited detail about the specifics of its potential role in care provision, with the exception of the brief mention of the need for caregivers to be referred to the site by health professionals. How will the website be maintained and whose responsibility is its sustainability? Furthermore, what role, if any, could this website have beyond Ireland?

The discussion and conclusions are combined. Please provide a separate discussion and conclusions sections, with implications etc. contained in the discussion and the clear findings and messages from the research in the conclusion section.

**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.

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:

Acceptable
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