Reviewer’s report

Title: The impact of population ageing on end-of-life care in Scotland: Projections of place of death and recommendations for future service provision

Version: 0 Date: 26 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Sarah Mitchell

Reviewer's report:

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Thank you for asking me to review this paper. It is well written and makes an important, relevant contribution to the international evidence base to inform the delivery of palliative care in the future.

I have a few suggestions for discretionay changes, which I hope are helpful.

Background
Line 21/22 states "most people express a preference to die at home if circumstances allow" - this is a widely accepted narrative in palliative care research and policy, but is still based on a limited evidence base. We have much more to learn about what this means, as alluded to in the discussion page 11 "care to feel safe and secure", so I wonder if it would be better to state "many people" instead of "most".

The final paragraph of the discussion provides important detail about what "integration of palliative care" means, and explains the situation in different countries. This could be edited and moved to the introduction, paragraph three, which refers to "the degree of palliative care integration" but does not provide any more clarity. This is important as "integration of palliative care" can be interpreted in many different ways.

Data sources
Does "care home" include both nursing and residential?

Projections of place of death
Adding the numbers of care home deaths in Scenario 3 to the percentages would be very helpful to understand what this means in the real world, as would adding numbers to the percentages provided for hospital, care home and home deaths in scenario 4.

Discussion
Page 9 line 22 -refers again to "palliative care integrated with existing services" - I am unclear about whether this means a palliative care approach delivered by all, or the integration of specialist services. This could be addressed by moving the paragraph which provides detail from the discussion to the
introduction (as suggested above).

The point (lines 27-28) about a fall in the number of care homes is very important for future consideration, as is the suggestion for training to support GPs to delivery good emergency care at the end of life (line 58).

I wonder if there are references about project ECHO that could be added - page 10, lines 4-5

Page 10 line 8 consider "many people" instead of "most" (as above)

Conclusion
The conclusion could be strengthened with a bit more detail around the sentence "However, this is very unlikely" - it would be interesting to hear the authors view on why this is very unlikely. This would provide important context for the clear recommendations provided.

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

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I am able to assess the statistics

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