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: 13 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Cecila Larsdotter (f Håkanson)

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

This is an overall interesting and highly relevant study that I think is highly needed in order to take the place of death discourse to a new level in terms of informing future policy in all countries.

I have only minor comments to this well written manuscript, mainly about some unclarities that I think will be helpful for the readers to see revised.

In the background section you describe the worldwide demographic shift. You also mention that the number of deaths in Scotland has increased but you present no numbers about the ageing progression in the country, which you do about the world - this would provide sense-making information.

You also in one section describe the changes (and continuity) related to causees of death, but you have, as far as I can see not included diagnosis in any of your analyses, so this information seems less relevant. I would rather have seen information about the current infrastructure related to the ageing population and to palliative care/place of death in the country, i.e. what’s the situation regarding number of nursing home beds/hospital beds and nursing home/hospital deaths for example? This is a major part of your discussion and as well the focus of your scenario analyses, and in the discussion, you relate to the situation in other countries, so this information is really lacking in my opinion.

There is some unclarity about the way data was derived from the experts, and analyzed, i.e. were they individually interviewed regarding personal recommendations? And, was this during the same occasion when all other experts were present? And what did you do with the group discussions? The presentation of the findings suggest that the text is a summary of some kind of qualitative analysis more than what is described about the prioritizing and flip charting. Please clarify this part of the method section.

In the discussion you claim the home death preferences, previously shown in studies as a reference when discussing your results. However, one could question how relevant this is, as we know for a fact that most of these studies do not target older people's preferences, and certainly not people with cognitive deficiencies (which is a large and growing group of individuals of direct relevance for forecast projections and future palliative care needs. In fact, these people have rarely been voiced about their preferences.
Finally, you refer to the need for a realistic debate—I think you need to be more clear about what a realistic debate implies.

**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.

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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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