Reviewer’s report

Title: The required competencies of physicians within palliative care from the perspectives of multi-professional expert groups: a qualitative study

Version: 0 Date: 02 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Michael Connolly

Reviewer's report:

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Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

I feel there are a number of areas that need attention to make this work more robust. While the reported study is identified as the first of its type to include a wide range of professionals it is not the first to look at issues related to competence for physicians providing varying levels of palliative care (see Connolly et al., 2018 American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, 35(10): 1304-1308 and work from Ireland on its Palliative Care competence Framework http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/clinical/natclinprog/palliativecareprogramme/Resources/competenceframework.pdf

In places the manuscript lacked clarity meaning difficulty for the reader to follow the discussion presented by the authors. No indication of potential bias of the manager who was asked to nominate representatives to take part in the workshops - how did the authors guard against this bias and ensure that the most appropriate person was attending and was not unduly influenced by the meager who selected them

The method used for content analysis needs to be explained and needs to be much clear in how the data were coded and how the emerging themes were identified. The section on deductive and inductive analysis needs attention to make it clearer and more easily accessible to the reader. The authors need to indicate how they knew when data saturation had been reached. The authors need to be aware that writing for an international audience may requires explanation of some terms and phrases used - in particular what is meant by 'special competency in palliative medicine.' Is this similar to higher specialist training in palliative medicinal as would be the case in many other European countries or is it different.

In a number of places palliative medicine and nursing are used, however the paper is clearly focused on physicians and so reference to nursing should be removed.
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.

Unable to assess

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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