Reviewer's report

Title: Factors underlying surrogate medical decision-making in Middle Eastern and East Asian women: a Q-methodology study

Version: 0 Date: 01 Jun 2020

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?
No - there are major issues

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?
No - there are major issues

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?
No - there are major issues

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?
Not sure - I am not able to assess the statistics in this study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?
No - there are major issues

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound?
If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?
Maybe - with major revisions

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS:
Detailed report of a Q Sort methodology. The authors have provided an extremely detailed account of the findings. However, given that this methodology is largely a qualitative approach the paper is very 'heavy' to read, is overly inclusive of narrative of the findings and complicated for the reader. The figure that gives a graph type presentation of the findings is equally difficult to comprehend. It is not clear how the researchers arrived at the 'models' and seem to make their entrance to the findings as being derived of six factors - how this is achieved is unclear to the reader. The results section is overly lengthy and very confusing. It is not clear why the sample was only female.
REQUESTED REVISIONS:
There should be clear objectives to support the study aim; repetitive. The design and execution of a Q sort study is fine if the reader is already familiar with this methodology. The paper does no clearly and simply describe the processes. It is difficult to understand if their interpretation of data is acceptable as the findings are too long, too repetitive, too wordy and the reader loses sight of the main issues/findings. The results are lost in 'too much noise' so are left with no clear messages other than these two group of women seem to have different priorities in decision making. Why only female sample not argued or even seen as a limitation - do only women make such decisions in these ethnic populations?

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:
As noted above.

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.

No

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

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