Reviewer's report

Title: Unmet needs of patients with cancer in their last year of life as described by caregivers in a developing world setting: A qualitative study

Version: 0 Date: 28 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

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 minor issues

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

No - there are minor issues

Statistics - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

N/A - there are no statistics in this study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable

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

Probably - with minor revisions
GENERAL COMMENTS: Overall this is a study addressing an important concern, that of unmet needs of patients with cancer near the end of life in Trinidad and Tobago. The results of the interviews with patient caregivers detail experiences and impact of inadequate and adequate care and the difference made, as well as areas where improvements could be made for better care and services. The results were presented in an easy to read and interesting informative manner.

This subjects in this study are the caregivers who were interviewed after the patient with cancer had died. It may be interesting to read more about the caregivers experience, since they were the one responding. The authors could consider reporting results of any correlation with type of cancer, who the caregiver was, and with other information about the patient and caregiver that was collected.

A potential concern with this study is the bias listed for the first author under the limitations section, page 32 line 29. If it is true that the author may have had significant bias, action should be taken to limit their involvement in the study even by potentially not using data collected by them or analysis done by them. If the authors did actually not allow bias to impact their ability as written in the paper, then suggestion is made to not include the description of author bias.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

The objective of the study is to describe the unmet needs of patients with cancer as described by their caregiver. The caregiver point of view should be stressed throughout as well as why caregivers of recently deceased patients were used as subjects and why this would be important, i.e. why the caregiver perspective is important and why we need to listen and understand and use the caregiver viewpoint to influence change. It wasn't exactly clear why patients themselves weren't used as subjects.

Minor edits:

Title - Suggest reworking the title such as Unmet needs of patients with cancer in their last year of life as described by caregivers in a developing world setting: A qualitative study

Abstract - page 2 line 10, "...and to determine he unmet needs of these caregivers and what recommendations...", please be clear whose needs this study is addressing (patients or caregivers or both)

Spacing - Be consistent with spacing between words and reference numbers in the text

Methods - page 6, line 21, please clarify why 6-12 months was used (and not less than 6 months)

Results - page 7, line 48, 21 interviewees were eligible, 3 declined; 21-3 = 18, and it seems 15 were included in this study, please explain the number of 18 versus 15
References - Be consistent with capitalization in the article titles

Limitations - Suggest not including the statement on page 32, line 22, "It was the intention..." as this statement does not add since it mentions an intention that was not acted upon. See above for comment about researcher bias. Serious consideration should be made if researcher bias actually did impact the study and results.

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.

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.

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.

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

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

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