Reviewer’s report

Title: Limited knowledge and access to palliative care among women with cervical cancer: an opportunity for integrating oncology and palliative care in Zimbabwe

Version: 0 Date: 19 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Ntizimira Christian

Reviewer's report:

Please include all comments for the authors in this box rather than uploading your report as an attachment. Please only upload as attachments annotated versions of manuscripts, graphs, supporting materials or other aspects of your report which cannot be included in a text format. Please overwrite this text when adding your comments to the authors.

Thank you for sharing this important study which will help the readers to understand the challenges of palliative care delivery in LMICs especially in Zimbabwe. I assume if PC is still challenging among women with cervical cancer that represent all types of cancer patients. For the better understanding of the context, I have some comments or questions:

1) The definition of palliative care from WHO has some limitations in the understanding of the meaning of the concept from different settings. I will suggest the author to consider also the consensus definition in the sense of local efforts will be valued.

2) It is important for the readers to understand the context of Zimbabwe in palliative care service (national policy, access to opioids, education...ect) to value the study. A paragraph would be great to understand the country situation of PC.

3) I didn't see the WHO reference for the palliative care definition. I'm sorry if you cited somewhere

4) The abbreviation of FDG should be explained on the first paragraph (page 4) instead of page 5

5) In the sub-theme: "Palliative care is compromised by high costs of drugs and treatments, it seems not clear to me about how high cost and drugs treatment of cancer reduced access to palliative. Are you focused to physical aspect instead of the holistic care? near more clarification. I know people can get access to palliative care especially when there is cost of cancer care and drugs so how it is different? except if the indicators are based on physical not spiritual, psychological, social-cultural, family members...ect
6) Would you mind also adding a short paragraph about the Cancer control plan in Zimbabwe or Harare to understand the need?

Congratulations again for this good study!

5) 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

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.