Reviewer's report

Title: Who needs and continues to need Paediatric Palliative Care? An evaluation of Utility and Feasibility of the Paediatric Palliative Screening Scale (PaPaS)

Version: 0 Date: 27 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Eva Bergstraesser

Reviewer's report:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to review this manuscript on the validation of the PaPaS Scale by a research group from Singapore. It is a well-structured and well written manuscript which shows the applicability of the PaPaS Scale.

Introduction,

p2, line 24 - reference 1 and 2 may be replaced by more recent publications.

Methods,

p4, line 11; instead of "specialist" paediatric palliative care service, I would use "specialized" PPC service.

p4, line 12 (see also p 11, line 1; I would use the same expression for life-limiting conditions as in the introduction (instead of life-shortening).

p4 - setting; please comment in more detail on the setting of the home-based PPC service, that also includes adult patients.

p4, line 20; inclusion criteria of patients - these are not congruent with the initial criteria of the PaPaS Scale where children under 1 year of age have been excluded. - This should be specified or explained (several items do not work in neonates and infants within their first year of life). For patients older than 18 years this is less problematic; however, this should also be described in the context of a PPC service.

p4, line 26; the internal validation of the scoring should be described in more detail (size of the sub-sample double checked by a second person of the research group).
In general, I wonder why patients have been excluded when they died within one year. Even if this does not allow for the evaluation of a need to continue palliative care, it provides information about the initial as well as continuing need of palliative care until death. This issue should be discussed.

Results,

If children less than 12 months old remain included, they should be described in more detail.

Discussion,

p7, line 19: the sentence starting with "The framework remains problematic,..." is not clear concerning its relation - does it refer to ref 25? - Please specify.

Table 4 and Appendix 1

In general, these suggestions are plausible.


Appendix 1 - the scores did not change as compared to the original scale - is this intended?

Limitations; it should be added that the weighing of the single items was not included in this study. In addition, within the limitations, the wide range of age groups should be commented.

Conclusion (line 23); what is meant by "industry wide adoption"?

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

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