Reviewer's report

Title: Perceived Barriers to Early Diagnosis of Breast Cancer in South and South Western Ethiopia: a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 04 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Tam Truong Donnelly

Reviewer's report:

Abstract:

This paper addresses an important women's health issue. Structured abstract is well written.

Table: Need to have tables report some general demographic data of participants (cancer patients and health care providers)

Background:

- This section needs to include more information. Authors should include information regarding breast cancer incident and mortality rates in Ethiopia and Africa if statistic available.

- As this manuscript is about early diagnosis of breast cancer, review of literature should include more contextual information related to the current early detection of breast cancer in Ethiopia. It should include information about the country's current breast cancer screening guidelines and public education regarding both breast cancer and its screening.

- If statistics available regarding Ethiopian women's breast cancer screening rates, please include it in this section

Methods:

- Please elaborate on the qualitative methodology. What is the research question(s)/ objective(s); explain why exploratory qualitative study is a good fit for the study and a best way to answer the study's research question(s).

- Procedure needs elaboration on recruitment procedure. How were patients and HCPs made aware of the study? How were they contacted and invited to participate in the study.

- Please elaborate on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

- Ethical concern (issue related to coercion) regarding recruitment of patients.

- Were participants informed that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw anytime without repercussion?
- Analysis section needs to elaborate on who performed data analysis and how the rigor of data analysis was attained and maintained.

Results: Well written in some sections, few suggestions as follow.

- Socio-demographic characteristic needs more info and would be more effective to put it in a table.

- In section: Patient related barriers, did the author investigate patients' knowledge and awareness of breast cancer screening as well? This is important to include because early detection of breast cancer is directly related to awareness and practice of breast examinations.

- The subheading "Health care provider related barriers" is misleading would it be more accurate to change to "Health care provider's perception of related barriers"?

Discussion:

- It would be very helpful to the readers and health care providers if the authors give specific recommendations to address issues identified in the study's findings.

Although some parts of the paper is well written, the paper needs editing.

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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