Reviewer's report

Title: Dental hygienists' perceptions of professionalism are multidimensional and context-dependent: A qualitative study in Japan

Version: 0  Date: 26 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Pia Andersson

Reviewer's report:

It is an interesting and valuable issue to understand and develop the dental hygienist profession. This paper is a step in this direction. However, I have some comments and suggest a major revision.

It is not completely clear if "professionalism in dental hygiene" means the professional work in dental hygiene or the dental hygienists professional approach. My impression is that it is the professional work you mean, but this have to be clear in relation to the qualitative analysis of the data and the findings.

In the findings you compare the different types of dental hygienist programm. This different educational types describes in the section Background (page 5). It would, however, be valuable if you could explain differences between the different educational types.

I suggest that you express the purpose with "was" instead of "is" (page 6, "The purpose of this study was…") and under Methods, Participants ("The participants in this study was….")

Summary data about Table 1 is missing in page 7. It suggest that you clarify Table 1: "Previous experience as dental hygienist", and "Years as DH". It is also unclear what you mean with the subheading "Interprofessional work".

Please, explain who performed the interviews and this person's experience of interviewing (page7). The interview guide involved different types of questions (page 7 and 8). Which of these were background questions and which was related to the purpose? Was all these questions appropriate to answer the purpose? In my opinion only question 5 and 6 are directly related to the purpose. Did you have any follow-up questions? Why was the data material translated into
English? What experience did you have of the English language and was there a risk that data was interpreted incorrectly due to the translation? This is important to discuss in the method discussion.

You describe the process of data analysis well, but I miss information about the manner in which it was carried out by you individually and/or together.

Regarding the findings, discussion of the findings and conclusion, see my comment about "professionalism in dental hygiene" at the top of this page. This must be consistent with the purpose and your definition about professionalism in dental hygiene and your research question.

Finally, I miss a discussion about the method.

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.

Unable to assess

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:

Acceptable

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