Reviewer’s report

Title: Ethical implications of digital communication for the patient-clinician relationship: Analysis of interviews with clinicians and young adults with long term conditions (the LYNC study).

Version: 0 Date: 22 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Marcello Ienca

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The topic is timely and interesting, and has been approached with appropriate methodology and meticulous analysis. However, there are a few minor imperfections or omissions in some parts of the text. Please see detailed comments below.

General Remarks:

1- Was the study formally approved or received a waiver from a local ethics committee? If yes, please provide this information in the text. If not, please illustrate which alternative ethical safeguards were employed. In addition, please indicate how informed consent was obtained from interview participants.

2- Please present direct interview quotations in italics to differentiate them from the rest of the text. Also, please report age and gender of the interviewee if such information is available and not subject to re-identification

3- Please indicate if the interviewees were given the opportunity to read the interview transcripts

4- Please elaborate more on the qualitative analysis. The authors indicate that they used "iterative" approaches. While this is certainly laudable, it is important to know how they moved from codes to themes (e.g. inductively? Deductively?). Also, some parts of the analysis (e.g. feelings of security associated with digital communication) appeared too quick and dismissive. Further elaboration would be beneficial.

5- It would massively improve the readability of the paper if the authors could present their main themes in a table or analogous visualisation.
6- Please present the paragraph at page 16 (starting with "A strength of our study" under a separate headline called "Strengths & Limitations" or alike

Specific remarks:

Abstract

p3, l2: "offers the potential for substantial benefits for improved patient care" --> cumbersome formulation. please rephrase

p3, l6: "this context" --> please disambiguate which context

p3, l8: "our objective" --> "The objective of this study"

p3, l19: Please report also the total number of interviews (129)

p3, 45: "overarching theme from the data" --> "emerging from the data"

Results:

p6, 130: Remove colon after "clinicians described"

p10, l51: "Our data shows" --> "Our data show"

Discussion

p14, l56: the phrase "patient-clinician relationship" is sometimes written with a hyphen and sometimes without. please be consistent throughout the text.

Conclusions

p15, l54: Not sure "facilitate" is the right verb. Maybe "promote"?

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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