Reviewer’s report

Title: Prediction of life-story narrative for end-of-life surrogate's decision-making is inadequate: a Q-methodology study

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Reviewer: Tenzin Wangmo

Reviewer's report:

This study aims to evaluate surrogate's prediction of family member's life story narrative in relation to end-of-life issues. The authors have undertaken an interesting study. Some considerations would make the study easier to understand, read, and contextualize its significance to the available literature.

1. It is not clear what variables delineate "life story narrative" in the methods and the results sections. Also, the authors note that there are three life story narratives; which one was used in this study?

2. Did the three steps of data collection happen on the same time or at three different time points? If at three different time points, I am surprised that there is no drop out.

3. In the same line, did the data collection stop when 30 pairs of participants were recruited for each type of relationships (husband-wife; sibling-sibling; parent-child)? How and why were 30 sets recruited? Did the pair of participants participate at the same time or at different times? When and how long did the entire recruitment take?

4. It would be useful for the readers to know why three different relationship pairs were selected? What was the rationale for recruiting and comparing these three relationship pairs?

5. All the figures lack titles, making it difficult to interpret the figures on their own. For figures 1 and 4, descriptions are needed to understand which group each bar represent.

6. In the discussion, the implications for surrogate decision making based on types of relationships studied and compared is not fleshed out. Since an effort was made to recruit and analyse the data by type of relationships, there is expectation of in-depth discussion teased by these three groups.

7. The study concludes that substitute decision making may be inadequate. This is a known finding. Thus, it raises the question, what new does this study add? This could be made
much clearer in the text, i.e., why is this study needed and how does it contribute to the field. Greater emphasis on explaining the life-story narrative and its value would be very helpful.

8. Since the study is carried out in Saudi Arabia, the paper does not provide any rationale as to why this context is relevant or irrelevant for this topic? There is no mention of whether the country and the respondents affect the understanding of the topic or not as well as why is this topic important in that context?

9. In the discussion, the study findings are compared with studies from the US, without any reservations about cultural differences.

10. The paper is quite long which makes reading cumbersome. There are several places where brevity could be helpful. For example, there are many Tables and Figures that present the results quite descriptively, however, the text explaining them are also quite detailed. The first paragraph of the discussion and first paragraph of conclusion are redundant, one could be deleted. Also, the discussion repeats the study findings. A few of those could be avoided.

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.

Unable to assess

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:

Acceptable
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