Reviewer’s report

Title: Parental decision-making following a prenatal diagnosis that is lethal, life-limiting, or has long term implications for the future child and family: a meta-synthesis of qualitative literature

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Reviewer: Steven Leuthner

Reviewer's report:

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Overall, I think this article is a nice paper that gathers qualitative information from many studies of prenatally diagnosed conditions. Having performed prenatal consultation for 24 years now as a neonatologist and palliative care physician, I find many of the authors' themes to hold true from experience and have been described in my publications as well.

The most concerning issue I have, however is that I disagree with the title of the paper, and feels it is misleading. My main concern is that I do not agree that the articles they reviewed are all in regards to what one standardly considers a fetal lethal or life-limiting conditions. At least in the US, when we discuss Down Syndrome or myelomeningocele, or cardiac defects, or some level of neurodevelopmental delay - while these are very serious prenatal diagnosis that lead women to make these very same difficult decisions, and while sure they are somewhat life-limiting, most people do not label them as lethal or life-limiting. This is then misleading and can lead us to compare apples to oranges.

I do think that the authors thematic analysis is true for many if not all of these diseases, but I just don't label them all as lethal or life-limiting. In fact, for the case of a true life-limiting to lethal conditions the hope of some long term survival that requires sibling care, for example is not real. For someone with severe disability it is.

The easiest way to rectify this is to change the title to "parental decision-making following a prenatal diagnosis that is lethal, life-limiting, or has long term implications for the future child and family: a meta-synthesis of qualitative literature" - or something like that.

That said, could the authors see if there are any differences in themes between the categories of lethal or life-limiting vs those with quality of life impacts for the child and family? For example, looking at the studies for Down Syndrome or myelomeningocele or some cardiac defects, at least
in the US that is never considered lethal, and parents do need to make a decision about either termination or taking care of that child because of US laws. Other conditions, such as Trisomy 13 or 18 do not have the same neonatal implications, and with neonatal palliative care a family may not be as burdened with a decision for a lifetime.

**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?**
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Yes

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If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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Not relevant to this manuscript

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