Reviewer's report

Title: Euthanasia requests in Dementia Cases; what are experiences and needs of Dutch physicians? A qualitative interview Study

Version: 0 Date: 16 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Claudia Gamondi

Reviewer's report:

I thank the editor for having given me the opportunity to review this piece of research. This paper outlines a qualitative research investigating Dutch physicians' views about euthanasia conducted upon advanced directives. Authors conclude that the majority of participants were asking for more clarification of their professional guidelines and that euthanasia in dementia can be ethically and emotionally challenging for many of them. The topic is of relevance for national and international discussion, given the raising number of countries legalizing forms of assisted dying.

The Introduction is well structured and offers a good overview of the area. Authors should consider the following points:

- Lines 68 the statement: "Dutch society expects euthanasia requests to be granted" needs a stronger reference readable in English.

- Lines 73-74: To allow a better understanding of epidemiology, total numbers should be presented with percentages of the overall cases of euthanasia each year.

- Lines 77-78: "And although the percentage of Advance Euthanasia Directives (AEDs) did not increase between 1998 and 2011, in the past decade a growing number of people does": it is not clear what authors mean by this. Please rephrase it.

- For international readers, please briefly describe if other countries allow euthanasia on advance directives and in dementia.

The methodology of the study follows from the research aims. There are some points that need clarification and more work.

- line 104: how researchers had a list of emails?

- line 105: do authors mean purposeful sampling?
- Line 108: Authors should provide more information to international readers about the "critical statement published in Dutch national newspapers" and what was the interpretation of the researchers of the attitudes of the physicians that signed this critical statement.

- Line 117: Which literature guided the preparation of the interview grid? How the two pilot interviews were handled? Were they included in the analysis?

- Line 122: Authors should better motivate the choice of using multiple interviewers and discuss implications for data collection and analysis.

- Line 128: Which differences emerged? How differences in interpretation were handled?

- How quotes were selected? How the translation in English of the quotes was performed? Quotes need to be related to a participant; please give a number or a pseudonymous. Some quotes are very long and do not apparently give reason of the codes created (example lines 292-296).

- The section on data analysis need to be more explicit in how the coding was done and how the codes generated.

Results: The result section presents interesting findings, whereas the text is more a presentation of single quotes than descriptive of the codes. In some points, it becomes verbose and arduous to read. I would suggest the authors to be more descriptive in the results section, providing more information about each code. If the word count would be too high, quotes could be presented in boxes or figures.

- Line 132: How these 11 participants were selected out of how many that showed interest? If maximum variation sampling was chosen, how researchers tested participants attitudes before choosing participants?

- Line 132-133: Was this 10-2 participants' ratio reflecting the maximum variation sampling chosen by researchers?

- Line 193: Is the word "dementia friendly" a direct quote? If yes should be written appropriately.

- Line 268: Is this an affirmation of participants or the view of authors? The discussion:
To sharpen the discussion, it will be of help to discuss the clinical and policy implication of their findings in a separate paragraph.

The strengths and limitations paragraphs should be reflected more in depth. Reflexivity of researchers should be explored and discussed. Authors should also discuss how the personal views of most of participants could have influenced their apparent low rate of euthanasia requests and how this low rate could have impacted the results of this research. The overall English of the paper should be extensively reworked.
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.

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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