Reviewer’s report

Title: Addressing harm in Moral Case Deliberation: the views and experiences of facilitators

Version: 0 Date: 22 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

Yes - appropriate statistical analyses have been used in the study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?

Yes - current version is technically sound
PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: This paper is useful in analyzing health care providers' responses to tragedy (insoluble moral dilemmas at the edges of life in which either moral choice between alternatives is a bad one). Through interviews and content analysis involving coding, the authors find common themes from those interviews. The results provide significant insight into how health care providers handle tragedy at a practical level and reveal a level of compassion that transcends the bureaucratic maze of contemporary health care. This paper should definitely be published.

The authors provide an interesting paper concerning health care providers' experience of using "moral case deliberation" in dealing with "tragedy." "Tragedy" is when either moral choice made leads to negative consequences for the patient. They use a subset of "content analysis," Charmez' "Grounded Theory," to analyze data from the health care providers in order to find common themes in how they deal with tragedy. Coding is used to determine which themes are used most frequently by health care providers in this context. This is a well-known method in the social sciences to determine how many instances of a particular theme or opinion come up, in this case, through analyzing health care providers' comments during interviews with researchers. I am impressed with the care taken in this study; the quantization of qualitative responses drew out the most important themes from the interviews classified in terms of whether they were ways of awareness of tragedy and dealing with tragedy. The results are useful in helping understand an area not widely researched, since most research has dealt with patients' and families' reactions to tragedy and not to health care providers' reactions. Providers' responses indicate them to be compassionate to the point of sometimes narrowing the professional distance that is found in patient-provider relationships. This is a worthy, carefully planned study that should definitely be published.

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.

I am able to assess the statistics
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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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