Reviewer's report

Title: Parents and nurses telling their stories: The perceived needs of parents caring for critically ill children at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre in Tanzania

Version: 1 Date: 25 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Vanessa Madrigal

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. I commend the authors in their efforts for obtaining nurses and family perspectives and using the data to help promote improvements. The manuscript might benefit from focusing on one topic at a time and helping to identify other barriers that need to be overcome. Please see further comments below.

Background:
- Please explain what is meant by "significant responsibility" for the parents. Are they expected to perform bathing/feeding? Monitoring of safety of a breathing tube for example? Also, this seems a little incongruent with the visitation policy, if they are only allowed to be at the bedside for so few hours?
- Other staff member's responsibility to patients is not discussed, for example what is the role of physicians with communication and discussions with families. As a multidisciplinary unit, proposed solutions to issues should be multidisciplinary in nature.
- End quotation missing page 4 line 10.
- Sentence on page 4 line 11 "The relationship between a parent and child …" seems odd and out of context.
- At the end of background, the reader is slightly unclear at what the paper will be presenting, "parent's needs…" meaning emotional support? Communication support? Advocacy to be present at bedside? Consider focusing the direction of the paper at this juncture.

Participants and recruitment
- Please present the inclusion criteria discussed on page 5 line 39.
- The last sentence "Six (6) …." Seems to belong in the results section, as does the sentence on page 6 line 16 "While 2 group discussions of parents had separate…"

Results:
- Page 8 line 34 sentences are confusing, opposing statements.
- Grammar: page 11 line 43-pediatric—where: floor? Unit? ICU
- Grammar: page 12 line 53- belonging instead of "belongingness"

Discussion:
- The authors should consider focusing their discussion. Are they advocating for emotional support? Improved communication? Unrestricted visiting hours? These are all important topics, and desirable outcome goals, though all very big topics on their own right, perhaps each deserving their own paper.
- Grammar: page 16 line 26 "clients" -it's the first time used in this paper, but consider consistent wording. Would "patients and families" work instead?
Consider discussing barriers to some of the recommendations beyond staffing. Should policy changes be considered?

The discussion needs a "study limitation" section

**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.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

**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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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