Reviewer’s report

Title: The Rocks and Hard Places of MAiD: A qualitative study of nursing practice in the context of legislated assisted death

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Reviewer: Cristina Monforte-Royo

Reviewer's report:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to review this article: "The Rocks and Hard Places of MAiD: A qualitative study of nursing practice in the context of legislated assisted death", NURS-D-19-00110. The aim proposed by the authors was to better understand how nurses were experiencing the enactment of the legislation in their practice related to MAiD and thus explored this within a qualitative study.

I commend the authors for addressing this investigating topic in a country with recently decriminalized MAiD. The article explores an area of interest for readers of BMC Nursing and I consider it to be a good article for publishing, but unfortunately I have some methodological questions that I am sure they will improve the quality of the publication.

1. Background: In my opinion, the background is well documented, but it is only focused in the explanation of de decriminalization of MAiD in Canada (very well explained, but maybe too much long). Information is lacking about similar studies around the world, about similar objectives, experiences of caring these patients in other countries, etc. Please, could you add this information?

2. Methods section:

The method design is well selected. But some details would need more information:

a) Why do you choose interviews conducted by telephone? This is not a good method to collect qualitative data. It is not possible to guarantee that interviewee has understood the question,

b) Could you justify how do you know the feeling of the interviewee during the interview? How did you know the experience to be interviewed about this controversial topic? How did you explain the topic and objective of this study?

c) I have many doubts about the suitability of this method of data collection by telephone. It is very difficult to ensure that they have understood well all the questions. Failure to see your nonverbal expression is a difficult or impossible to control bias

d) What is the role of the main researcher? Who collected the data? Is the main researcher the same person who collected data? Which was their role with participants? How did researchers explain the objectives of this study? How did you control the possible bias of the explanation?

e) In my opinion, I miss an initial question about his or her experience when legislation changed
allowing MAiD; I also miss a question about how every nurse was trained into MAiD at his or her health care center, etc. It seems that the authors go directly to the application of MAiD, but all the experience of the implementation of MAiD (training, application, etc.) is missing, since it was only 2 years since it was implemented; it is a very big change in a very short time.

f) I miss a greater number of quotations that better illuminate the results.

g) A more detailed table about demographics is lacking. It could be useful to know every participant with his/her age, experience, etc.

I am sure you can add all this information, improving considerably the methods section of this manuscript.

3. Results:

a) In the first paragraph of Results' section, it could facilitate the reading to possible readers, to explain the number of emerged themes and subthemes. Afterwards, it could be easier to explain theme by theme.

b) I miss a greater number of quotations that better illuminate the results. It could be useful to add quotation in a table or supplementary file.

c) I miss comments from the participants, about underlying suffering, and how do nurses try to relieve this suffering before applying MAiD?

d) I miss comments about how palliative care nurses, whose work is to relieve suffering and to improve quality of life, personally, how do they live the application of MAiD?

4. Discussion:

In my opinion, the expression between a rock and a hard place it is very original and it helps to understand the study phenomenon. But in my opinion, more quotations are required in order to understand this expression.

Another point is regarding the future clinical practice proposals. Authors state that "Clearly, in light of a legislated approach to MAiD that requires high degrees of delegation, precision, and obligation we have much work to do in supporting nursing through basic and continuing educational programming, care pathways and best practice guidelines, and workplace environments. And we must continue to try to understand the important lessons that nurses' experiences of being caught "between a rock and a hard place" can offer with respect to what these evolving care options mean for all concerned". I miss other proposals related with: to support those nurses that do not want to be involved in MAiD and to guarantee their conscientious objection.

More discussion with other similar studies is necessary.

I encourage the authors to add the lacking information to this manuscript and I hope to read this manuscript published in the future.
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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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