Reviewer’s report

Title: Best practice and needs for improvement in the chain of care for persons with dementia in Sweden: a qualitative study based on focus group interviews

Version: 3
Date: 8 July 2014
Reviewer: Ashleigh Pell

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The paper covers a subject area of possible interest to those working in the field of dementia. The aim as stated is clear. Qualitative research interviews are a valid tool by which to investigate the research question.

Major Compulsory revisions

1) Some terms are used which should be defined more clearly.

Throughout, I think the term “transitions” of care requires clear definition. Is this transition of stage of dementia, or transition from one care system to another? To do so may require further explanation of care pathways for Dementia in Sweden. I also feel the term “follow up indicator of quality” should be explained.

2) The paper refers to standards of best practice which should be described more clearly. The Discussion appears to compare practice identified at interview with best practice. Specific aspects of best practice should be stated here with appropriate references. It may be interesting to note whether expressed views differed from best practice in any aspects? For the stated conclusions to be robust the best practice standards need to have been clearly set out and the results need to be presented as the views expressed by interview participants.

3) There are multiple instances of poor grammar. Individual instances include:

The following sentence requires a review of grammar: “Professional care providers’ perspective concerning best dementia practice strategies can be seen as a follow-up indicator of quality in the chain of care for persons with dementia and next of kin. “

Grammar should be reviewed in the following sentence (I suggest availability?): “The Swedish Social Services Act (21) and Health and Medical Services Act (22) lay emphasis on access to health services based on the assessment of individual need and available to all members of society on equal terms “

The style of language here is too informal for a research paper: “The nurses gave these professional care providers oral information about the study and asked whether they were interested in taking part and whether (if they were interested) it was all right for researchers from Lund University to get in touch with them.”

Line 529: “Surprisingly, the question of palliative care was not mentioned in the
focus group discussions in this study”. Palliative care is not a question. You have already mentioned end of life care in dementia at some length - how is this different from palliative care, please make this clearer.

4) The Methods section requires greater clarity. The paragraph “Participants” should be more clear and concise. What type of professional care providers were approached, how many and in what settings? Were any participants excluded? I think you need to give more information about the roles of the participants and their experience in the field of dementia. Who analysed the content of the interviews – include this in methods.

The context paragraph contains useful information but this may be better placed in the background section. It would be interesting to know why parts of the treatment pathway are divided between county council and municipality.

Please make it clear what RTPC stands for. I don’t understand the sentence: “The eight RTPC countries provided focus group interviews with professional care providers representing the chain of care in each country.” “Do you need a reference or appendix here for the development of the focus group interview guides or was this your work? Good account of structure of focus group interviews.

5) The Results and Discussion need to make clear that the findings are the views expressed by interview participants rather than established facts. The paragraph titled “Day care facilitates transition in the chain of care” raises some interesting points, but be sure to highlight that these are views expressed by participants rather than proven facts. The paragraph beginning line 287 reads poorly and requires review. The first sentence indicates that this fact has been proven, rather it should be clear that these were the views expressed in the interview. Participants may have reported that flaws occur but is there evidence these actually occur? The sentence as follows requires further explanation: “The written information exchange was hindered by the secrecy as between the Social Services Act and the Health and Medical Services Act.” The paragraph beginning line 317 reads much more clearly and is interesting. Various valid points presented down to line 370.

6) The following are inaccuracies:

In the Background section: The prevalence of dementia is increasing due to population aging but is the risk increasing?

Line 472: “An early diagnosis, which is to say a diagnosis made when it still can be understood by the patient.” This is not a universally accepted definition of early dementia.

Line 474: Your references here I think highlight the importance of access to treatments which may delay cognitive decline rather that demonstrate the efficacy of cholinesterase inhibitors or memantine.

7) The paper is rather long and could be more concise in parts, particularly the
Background.

Minor Essential Revisions
None

Discretionary Revisions
None

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests