Reviewer’s report

Title: Physicians' Knowledge and Practice on Death Certification in the North West Bank, Palestine: Across sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 25 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Pam Groenewald

Reviewer's report:

Second Revision

I have looked through the authors response to reviewers. I cannot find their responses to my previous review (Reviewer 3) and many of them have not been addressed.

I think that this is an important paper which, whilst confirming work by other authors, has not to my knowledge been done in Palestine before.

However, my main concern remains that the standard of English is still not good enough for publication.

Specific comments:

Introduction

Line 32: Suggest rephrase this sentence to: Physicians are usually required to report the cause-of-death sequence on a death notification form.

Line 33: Rephrase second sentence to: Accurate COD reporting is a prerequisite for good quality mortality statistics required for health policy decisions.

Line 40: replace "familiar with the proper way" with "familiar with international recommendations for completing the DNF"

Line 44: the national DNF is referenced to the US Department of health and Human Services handbook on medical certification?? Is this correct? Surely this should be referenced to the Palestinian death certificate?

Lines 53 and 54: English needs editing

Pg 4; Line 17 scientifically spelt incorrectly
Methodology pg 5 line 22: Specify how many researchers reviewed the case scenario COD independently.

Results: pg 5 some further information about the non-responders should be provided - are there likely to be differences between them and the respondents?

Line 50: "Filling out" is not the correct term for completing a form.

Line 53: Problem in the design of the form is reported as the second largest problem in Table 2. It would aid in understanding if this could be described in more detail - what is the problem with the design and is this referring to the national DNF or the WHO recommended form? It would also be helpful to see what the national form looks like in an appendix (translated into English)

Page 6: Line 14 "completely correct" should be replaced by completely correctly.

Discussion: lines 41-47. This first paragraph needs to be improved and references included - I do not think it is correct or sufficient to say that "many research projects in many countries consider it as the most reliable source of data" - data for what? Also, the last sentence in that paragraph needs to be clarified.

Below are some of my comments from previous review that have not been addressed

1. It would assist readers unfamiliar with the topic if a copy of the national DNF (translated into English) was shown either as a figure or in an annexure where the differences from the WHO form could be highlighted. I previously suggested this but it was not addressed in the revision. I think this is very important because if the national form is not designed to report a causal sequence as in the WHO document this will continue to confuse physicians about the correct way to report the causal sequence.

2. Replace "filling up the DNF" with "completing the DNF" throughout document - this has also not been addressed. "Filling up" is not the correct English phrase for completing a document.

3. Response rate of 75% should be discussed. Which drs did not respond - are they different from the study sample? This has also not been addressed in the revision.

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 recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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