Reviewer's report

Title: The struggle against perceived negligence. A qualitative study of patients' experiences of adverse events in Norwegian hospitals

Version: 1 Date: 21 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Anna Pinto

Reviewer's report:

This is a significantly improved version. However, there remain a few issues that need to be addressed. Please see below for specific comments.

Introduction:

- The introduction is long with a lot of abstract concepts discussed that are not clearly linked to the aims of the study. Pages 5-6 in particular could be shortened to include the key points that the authors wish to make with clearer statements about their relevance to the aims of the study. The wording is very unclear in certain places. For example: "According to Foucault, power relationships affect all knowledge development [27]. Thus, the desire to increase patient safety does not spring from a specific point or superior position, such as the authorities or hospital management. Rather, it stems from a concern about how free individuals as well as their actions and self-perceptions are affected. Power infiltrates structures in a decentralized manner and rests with knowledge that is typically obtained through science [28, 29]. The dominant perspectives on patient safety shape discourses through an interplay of rules that determine what holds as true within a limited area [30]. Hence, professional, scientific and political discourses produce that which is discussed within fixed frames [27, 30]." The introduction would benefit from simpler, clearer wording and more focused statements.

Results

- Names of participants are included on two occasions. Please ensure all data is presented in an anonymised way.

- The authors report that they used content analysis, however there is no reference to how many participants reported the different themes. It would be helpful to know how many times the different themes were discussed/reported.
- It is not clear if there were any exceptions in the narratives (e.g. participants who had a positive experience of communication etc). If so, it would be useful to include and discuss those.

Methods

- It is good to see that the authors have included more details on the methodology that they used. However, there is some repetition and certain sections are described in a lot of detail that is not essential (e.g. details of geographic area covered etc). This section would benefit from a more focused/concise revision.

Discussion

- Some comments are not clearly linked with the study findings. An example of a statement that it is not very clearly based on the reported findings is: "Essentially, it makes little difference to the patient whether the incident is defined as an "adverse event", a "complication" or a "failure in the system"; what matters is that an "unfortunate situation" has arisen that must be handled in some way or other". Please refrain from strong interpretations that are not based on your findings or existing literature. The discussion would benefit from more tentative statements throughout. Where personal opinions are included, it should be clear that this is the case.

- As with the introduction, wording is unclear in some places (e.g. references to Foucault's theory and concepts would benefit from clearer language).

General comments

- Some vocabulary and grammatical issues remain throughout the manuscript (e.g. somatic hospitals).
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.

Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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Not relevant to this manuscript

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