Reviewer's report

Title: "Breaking bad news to antenatal patients with strategies to lessen the pain: a qualitative study"

Version: 0 Date: 17 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Malin Jordal

Reviewer's report:

General comments:

Thank you for reading this article on an interesting and important topic. However, I have some major (and some minor) comments that I strongly suggest the authors to consider.

General comments:

English language should be improved - please send the paper to a professional proof reader.

General in the method chapter: Please indicate which references you were inspired from. Also indicate the type of analysis (phenomenology? Discourse analysis? Content analysis?) or theory you were inspired by. Reading your checklist for reporting on qualitative studies, I do not think this is done adequately. I suggest the authors read more about qualitative methods (could also be inspired by the checklist) and do a more through description of method and analysis.

General on the result and discussion section: This is not a correct way of presenting results. The three categories presented in the text are not the same as in the tables. You can not only give the information in a table and not in the text. I also think it is way too many categories. These should be compiled into fewer ones (or perhaps themes, depending on the type of analysis). It can be due to your very broad aim - which can give you way too many things to report. I suggest the authors should get more familiarised with how to report on qualitative studies, perhaps by reading some other published qualitative articles. The discussion section should also not be written in point form or numbered as it is at the present.

Page 2 line 55: add 'always' (if communication is always important)

Page 3, line 56-58: This sentence do not seem right - rewrite.
Page 104-105: Very broad aim. Also a bit strange to read 'phenomenological' in brackets. I assume you will talk later about this later?

Page 5, 106: Here you talk about discourses - which makes one assume some kind of discourse analysis. Explain more.

Page 5, 111: Please specify time of the data collection.

Page 5, 123: Please indicate that it is the principal investigator of the study.

Page 5: 126-128: Here you state that you avoided personal interpretation. I find this very problematic; qualitative research cannot be 'objective'. Instead you have to write how your preunderstanding might have affected your findings.

Page 6, 133-141 is one long sentence. This should be rewritten and made into shorter sentences.

Page 6, 142: who is the principal investigator (author number)?

Page 6, 143-144: what do you mean by scientific rigour and how was this reviewed by other researchers?

Page 6, 144: What do you mean by that both predefined categories and emerging ones were identified? Please explain.

Page 6, 144-147: Please explain more of what you mean by triangulation and how it was done. Also use a reference for triangulation.

Page 6: 153-154: This should belong to the method chapter. But you could have a 'characteristic of the participants' section in the beginning of the result chapter or just before (where you place your table).

Page 6, 155: Please indicate which were the categories you found here.
Page 7, 159: How do you know they are ignorant of communicative techniques? It sounds like the researchers' interpretation and should be verified with a quote or more explanation (of what this was indicated by). You also say that you use content analysis (although not inspired by who) - and I do not know whether it is content or latent messages (assume it is content since not more else is written). If so, it is hard to understand how you come to this interpretation (that health personnel were ignorant of communication techniques). Does this rely on content coding of your participant observation notes? You should also say something more about how these notes were done, for example mere descriptions of observations or own interpretation).

Page 7, 165-168: This is unclear. Was this what the health care staff indicated (ideal place for CBN)? If so, please specify.

Rest of the article: Please see general comments on methods, results and discussion.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
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