Reviewer’s report

Title: ‘Birds of the same feathers fly together’: Midwives’ experiences with pregnant women and FGM/C complications - A grounded theory study in Liberia

Version: 0 Date: 28 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Vanja Berggren

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Authors,

I have twenty years of research experience in the fields of FGM and was surprised to find new information in your well written manuscript that I do find worthy publishing. It is a clear and solid qualitative manuscript, but I have three minor comments where it can be improved.

First of all: The design is well described, with good references to the feminist GT, steps ok described. The ethical considerations are well explained. The result section is also well written.

My first comment is at p 10. I wish the authors to re-write the sentence "This was a traditional belief that one midwife defined as a myth!" This is one of the very few times, or even the only one, when the authors not stay at the "participants perspective" when writing the results, as this sounds there is an judging attitude by the researchers, strengthen by the "!".

The second comment - where I also request the authors to rewrite or preferably remove is at p 22. Just before the sub-heading "Forecast persistence..." you write "According to this midwife, the zoes can even harm you!" In this sentence you are suddenly TOO MUCH on the participants side, it sounds as you are transferring the participants fear and it is also not clear who they mean is "you". A scientific qualitative text has to be balanced.

Thirdly, concerning the discussion one could wish some reflections from the authors about the limited sample/the disadvantages with the snow-ball sampling maybe only reaching persons with similar perceptions. And what about the saturation, a statement in GT, when you ahd a selected no of participant and three declined participation.

An almost perfect manuscript, almost ready.

Yours sincerely,

Vanja Berggren

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