Reviewer's report

Title: "I need somebody who knows about feet" a qualitative study investigating the lived experiences of conservative treatment for patients with Posterior Tibial Tendon Dysfunction.

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Anita Williams

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for this interesting paper. The research contributes to the body of knowledge and raises some important questions in relation to the management aspects.

Whilst the participants are (as you point out a potential limitation) low in number there is a depth of information. The themes may well not change if you had interviewed more. The focus of your research is well justified given the gap in the literature. Your research approach is appropriate to the aim. I do think you need to justify the focus on your purposive recruitment of your participants given that the condition is prevalent in people with inflammatory arthritis i.e. can you justify your population from epidemiological data?

There are a few amendments required -

The abbreviation MsCs - I am not sure this is a conventional abbreviation - it is may be better to use MSK conditions.

Your philosophical approach is well described and justified but there needs to be a clear distinction between the approach and the methods under the umbrella term of IPA. You also need a reference to support the last sentence in the method Line 158-159.

Could you insert the ethics panel reference number.

As the data was collected in 2017 it maybe worth mentioning in the discussion part/s the potential for pathways to have changed within 2 years and possibly other aspects of care.

IN relation to the questions asked how were these arrived at? were they obtained from the researchers experience and then agreed between the co-authors, emerge from the literature or did you have patient expert opinion. Please describe how you think semi-structure fits with IPA. Perhaps define 'comfortable interaction' did you create conversation outside of the questions to settle the interviewees into the flow of the 'conversation' in order for them to feel comfortable to reveal the truth? This is especially important as you do say that they were interviewed in the clinic where they had reviewed their treatment.

Is there a difference between 'the founders of IPA' and the 'designers of IPA (lines 216-7).
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

'I declare that I have no competing interests'

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal