Reviewer’s report

Title: Disclosure of domestic violence and sexual assault within the context of abortion: meta-ethnographic synthesis of qualitative studies protocol

Version: 1 Date: 20 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Melody Morton Ninomiya

Reviewer’s report:

Overall Comments

Overall, I think the proposed systematic review will offer important and interesting insights. I am not familiar with meta-ethnography and consequently, my comments and feedback likely reflect what other readers who are also unfamiliar will need further explanation on as well. Because I am still not clear on meta-ethnography, I am not sure if the aims of the study neatly line up with what meta-ethnography has to offer in this systematic review. This manuscript needs more cohesiveness (e.g. flow of writing and logic), clarity, and rationale for the content provided. I encourage you to have the next iteration reviewed by people who are not part of the study to ensure that the writing and content is clear. There are several grammatical, punctuation, and capitalization errors throughout the paper.

Feedback on specific sections are as follows:

Abstract

1. Early in the abstract, you say that women who have an abortion "are at a higher risk of experiencing domestic or sexual assault than women who continue with their pregnancies". It reads as though abortion is a contributing factor to domestic or sexual assault.

2. Remove anthropomorphisms like "included studies will evaluate.." and "review will illuminate..."

3. Will all 4 reviewers screen and review full-texts? Seems excessive (to have 4 people review each doc) unless you mean that every document (at abstract and full-text screening stages) will be reviewed by two people, shared between four reviewers.

4. I don't think it's crucial to be as specific as you are in the abstract re: which reviewers will be involved in the data extraction.

5. Overall, I think the abstract needs some editing to make it "tighter". Be more succinct and clear.
Background

1. You mention a scoping review but it's not clear if you conducted the scoping review. If you did conduct the scoping review, what was found? All you mention is that you didn't find any synthesis of studies. If this scoping review was done by someone else, it would still be good to know what was found and requires a reference.

Aim

Consider pluralizing this section since you have more than one aim.

The secondary aim of "uncover[ing] how frontline health professionals can be supported..." sounds speculative. Are you looking to see how frontline health professionals are trained and supported currently? Or are you trying to compare what has been shown to work well with women who have domestic violence/sexual assault to disclose (e.g. trauma-informed practices) with what frontline workers do? I think this aim requires more clarity.

Study Design

This section starts with the data synthesis. Is there a reason why you are not describing the protocol in the order that you will be conducting the systematic review? I would imagine you might start with the search strategy. Furthermore, it would be good to include your reason/rationale for using a meta-ethnographic approach. It's not clear what the relationship is between a qualitative meta-synthesis approach and a meta-ethnography - is a meta-ethnography a structured method of conducting a qual meta-synthesis?

Approach to Searching

Sample: Could you make a clearer argument or rationale for the inclusion criteria? I see that you are looking at studies that are 1) qualitative, 2) collect data on discourses between women who have an abortion and specific professionals involved with abortions, and 3) OECD countries. The sentences about the OECD and subsequent sentences are not clearly linked. Please make this paragraph more cohesive and explicit.

Phenomenon of Interest: Is there a reason you have a specific sentence about including people under the age of consent? Are you not including all ages of women (including women/girls under the age of consent) who were subject to domestic violence & incest?

Design: The rationale for looking at documents 1980 and later seems to be very US-centric while this review is global (within OECD countries). Was literature on this topic born out of one educational package developed in the US?
Evaluation: I hope that a preliminary search has been done to be assured that you will have documents that will meet all inclusion criteria. Without being familiar with this body of literature, I imagine that there would be very few that evaluate discourses on domestic violence and sexual assault. How common is it to evaluate discourses on issues? This sub-section needs more clarity.

The first paragraph on page 9 is hard to follow. Please re-write it with clear and sequential descriptions of what you intend to do - without bracketed notes to readers. Please define rollback if you are going to use that term.

Study Screening: Will there be an initial screening based on titles and abstracts, before reading the full-text? It is unclear. What if consensus is not reached?

Appraisal: It appears that Reviewer #1 will do all appraising. What kind of guidance/role is Reviewer 4 offering to Reviewer 1?

Data Extraction: This section needs to be re-written in a way that orients readers who are not familiar with the meta-ethnographic process you are using. The idea of finding metaphors for each study is very vague notion. It would be helpful to provide a clearer understanding of what this processes entails and achieves. Briefly orient the readers to why you are using this process and how it informs the aims of this study. Help connect the dots for readers. What is reciprocal translation, refutational translation synthesis, and line-of-argument translation synthesis? Please define. In the last paragraph on page 12, you refer to phase five…but none of the other phases are clearly numbered. It’s not clear what you are referring to without some investigative work.

Discussion: Consider changing reference to women who have had an abortion as "abortion population".

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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:

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