Reviewer’s report

Title: Following the MH17 plane crash in the Ukraine: A qualitative interview study on the experience of sudden loss of a colleague or neighbour

Version: 1 Date: 02 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Josefin Sveen

Reviewer's report:

In the manuscript the authors aimed to gain insight into how colleagues at work and neighbors experience sudden death after a disaster.

I have several questions and suggestions.

I would encourage the authors to consider revision to the title to enhance clarity, "a study of grief", as stated in the aim of the study it is exploring the experience of loss and not specifically grief.

The background description of the events following the MH17 crash is it necessary for the manuscript or can be shortened in the background?

Heading on page 4, line 44 only include workplace, should neighbors be included as well?

Page 4, line 46, refers to 9 different studies/reviews about health effects, which is very vague about the actual findings, a suggestion is to include more specific details. Also, the studies include different types of disaster, for example natural and man-made disasters. Are the health effects the same after different types of disasters?

The background address loss after disaster, but according to the aim the focus appear to be loss after sudden death. The individual in this disaster died suddenly, but a suggestion is to revise the aim to focus on loss after disaster.

The method section needs revision.

First sentence in method, repeats the aim to some degree, but also differ: "how they grieve and cope", is it the same as "mourn"?

Employed qualitative methods - can the authors be more specific what method was used?

Apart from the first sentence, the section describes how the checklist (or interview guide) was developed. A suggestion is to add a subheading "Checklist development"

Could examples be given on how themes were derived?

What do the author mean by collaborating institutes and citing a systematic review?
The second paragraph in the methods, a suggestion is to include the text under "participants".

Please state, if the consent was collected verbally and if they received written information about the study?

Under the procedure section, second paragraph, "a protocol", what type of protocol is the authors refereeing to?

Should there'n't be a section about the data analysis. How the data was analyzed and what method was used, needs to be described in more detailed. It is difficult to understand how the authors came to the themes in the results? Also can the author explain why some themes are "time frames" from the disaster and some are not?

The results appear to be a description of the interviews organized according to content, and not so much a qualitative analysis of the interview to answer the research questions. How do the themes and its content relates to the aims of the study is not clear. For example, how does the first theme "Relationship to victim" relate to the study aim? First paragraph of Identification, is not results but a description of the event it sounds like.

In the theme After one and a half years, it is not clear how the text is showing that "most effects on health and well-being have vanished." And it also raise the question, how was it before this time period, which is not described.

Last sentence in the Unlike a car accident? "To what extent this has an influence on mourning and how it might have affected health and well-being cannot be determined with certainty based on the interviews." A suggestion is to move this to the Discussion.

First sentence in discussion, that the participants do not qualify themselves as bereaved person, is this information retrieved from the results?

I would encourage the authors to discuss the results, in accordance with the study aims, in the discussion and conclusion.

I would encourage the authors to significantly broaden the limitations of the study in the discussion.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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.
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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