Reviewer’s report

Title: What bereaved parents want health care providers to know when their babies are stillborn: a community-based participatory study

Version: 0 Date: 18 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Shuntaro Aoki

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for allowing me to read this valuable research article. I believe that the data from parents who have given birth to stillborn babies are valuable. To convince and get readers to read these valuable data, it would be greatly appreciated if first, the originality of the article was specified and second, if the validity of the methodology and results was further described. Please consider the following points.

Introduction:

1. There are "many stigmas," but what exactly is a stigma?

2. "Stillborn is remarkably underestimated, disenfranchised, and misunderstood" What specific kind of problems do you have? Furthermore, how will these problems be solved in this study?

3. With reference to "little is known about the experiences and needs of bereaved parents after stillbirth from their perspective, especially fathers who are often underrepresented.", what problems are caused because these points are not clear? What are the benefits of resolving this?

4. Is it a new aspect of the current study to use participatory research as a methodology? In the discussion, it is noted that there is a similar previous study. Consequently, if you compare this study to the previous one, the originality of the current study will be conveyed to the reader. Please consider this point.

Methods:

5. I am uncertain if participatory research is a scientifically valid method because I do not specialize in qualitative research. By referring to the previous research, please explain how the methodology is valid and reliable.

6. For what are skilled facilitators and research assistants trained for? In what kind of training did they participate?
7. "bereaved parents and their family members conceptualized the study, set the research question and design, conducted focus group discussions, assisted in analyzing data, and participated in the writing and editing of this paper." To justify how you are conducted the research, it is important to carefully explain the process. How did you formulate the research questions and perform data analysis? Is it appropriate for them to formulate and support research questions? You noted that you participated in the writing of the thesis. How and at what point did you participate and how did this enhance your paper? It has been reported that this kind of content occurred as a result, but it may have been decided to become such content at the time of formulating the research question. If this is the case, it will be extremely important whether or not the decision to formulate a research question was made arbitrarily.

8. From the time since the death of the baby, has there been an impact? If so, please state whether this may have resulted in bias in the findings and how you handled the bias. If not, please explain why there is no bias.

9. Is there any reason why the focus group only has men and women?

10. How did reflective journals and field notes during the course of this study increase its credibility?

11. "Transcripts were analyzed by first coding each transcript individually and then collectively for distinct concepts and categories of meaning, which were then grouped into themes. "Please explain the analysis you employed in greater detail. In particular, please describe the process and how the results were validated.

12. "Reflective notes highlighted personal values and interests that influenced analyses. These notes helped each research team member bring to the interpretation of the data a richer understanding of the complex phenomena of bereavement after a baby's death." I do not know how this method is reflected in the results.

13. "Co-investigators shared emergent themes with bereaved parents and HCPs in various community settings. This broad-based member check contributed to the trustworthiness of the findings, while uncovering nuances within key themes, such as the role of HCPs during the finite window of opportunity to interact with the baby's after death." Please add information and citations to support its validity.

Results:

14. How did you examine the gender differences?

15. What is the abbreviation for FG?
16. It overlaps with the comments on the method. However, what criteria did you use to extract common examples? Your paper can only be read subjectively. Thus, please describe how objectivity and validity were secured and state if it is a valid methodology. I believe it would be useful if all the following common elements were extracted in the same way.

Discussion:

17. "Our results are consistent with studies conducted with predominantly bereaved mothers after stillbirth in the United States and Sweden15,17." What is the originality of this study when compared to 15 and 17 studies? In the introduction, it was stated that there is no such previous study. Consequently, in the introduction, it is necessary to describe the originality of the current study after first explaining how it is different from previous studies.

18. I think that the other considerations are justified, but the process you employed in the analysis is unclear and the reader cannot judge whether the results are valid. I recommend that the results be presented in accordance with the appropriate analysis method and process.

**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.

Unable to assess

**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.

I recommend additional statistical review
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