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: 02 Jan 2020

Reviewer: Jane Warland

Reviewer's report:

This sensitively conducted study makes an important contribution to the body of knowledge for care when a baby is stillborn. I recommend publication.

I offer the authors the following minor suggestions:

The authors correctly state that one of the strengths of their study is the number of fathers recruited. I wonder if they would consider sharing a sentence or two in methods about their recruitment strategy for fathers for the benefit of other researchers who also struggle to recruit them?

There are some minor phrasing issues eg:

Page 3 line 14: the use of the word pedagogy. I think many readers would consider "pedagogy" more an approach to teaching than what is taught so perhaps "curricula" might be a better word?

Page 3 line 26 I don't think "these" is needed

Page 3 39 I don't think "rare" is needed. The reader can make up their own mind about the rarity or otherwise of this research

Page 4 line 4 sentence ending with "agency of parents" warrants a reference

Page 4 line 41-44 "to have had" is a little wordy and "63% reported a loss in the past four years" would be fine in my view

Page 4 line 48 remove "only" as not needed and also in the context of this sentence seems to be giving an unwanted impression of minimization of the losses

Page 5 line 38: think you mean babies rather than baby's

The results are nicely explained and exemplar quotes all illustrate your findings well.
There was a missed opportunity to discuss what you allude to in your introduction about lack of education for care providers. I think this is seen in the social workers incorrect and actually inappropriate response in the quote on page 10 FG2 and again in the "nothing can be done" comment on page 13 line 19. I think a paragraph about need for better care provider training in your discussion is warranted especially as you once again allude to this in your conclusion. Speaking of the conclusion it is unusual to include new material in a conclusion (page 16 line 45-61) and as this also alludes to a need for better care provider education perhaps this section is better placed in the discussion?

You also mention the word stigma in your intro and conclusion without mentioning it anywhere in your results or discussion. I would suggest either adding some discussion about stillbirth stigma or removing these words?

Once again my congratulations on a well conducted important study

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

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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