Reviewer’s report

Title: Parents and clinicians: partners in perinatal bereavement research - experiences from the International Stillbirth Alliance Conference 2017

Version: 0 Date: 08 Oct 2018

Reviewer: J Johnson

Reviewer's report:

I enjoyed reading this commentary describing how parents were invited to collaborate in an academic conference. From the way the conference is described, parent experiences set the tone and focus in a positive way that would have kept scientists and researchers focused on the ultimate point of their work. I think if more conference operated like this, research might have a greater impact in general. I have some comments on the manuscript designed to improve it.

Abstract

'PLRG' needs to be defined before it is used as an acronym 'a parent sub-committee of staff and parents': This is a bit confusing, 'a sub-committee of staff and parents' would be clearer.

The topics of the recommendations are alluded to, but could they be provided here in brief instead? For example - rather than just mentioning 'the use of creative arts in the expression of grief', is the recommendation that 'creative arts should be used to help parents express grief'? A lot of people only read abstracts, so it is important to communicate key findings here clearly.

What we did

Was the service of remembrance linked with the Mariposa Trust? If it is, I think this is worth clarifying here. If not, I think this is a point to consider in the discussion (i.e., what your experiences mean for the work or impact of the Mariposa Trust).

Figure 5 is referred to on page 11 but I can't see this at the end of the document.

I am unclear about the link between the parent assembly and the creative workshop. Were these the same thing or two separate things? I am further confused when it states that the creative workshop was apparently for 'all of' the attendees (page 11, line 49), as initially the parent assembly is introduced as a 'space where parents... could develop a collective statement' (page 11, line 15). This needs to be reworded for clarity.

Learning opportunities

Top of page 13: Breaking bad news is an issue which needs addressing in relation to bereavement care in maternity services. A recent meta-analysis of breaking bad news interventions across healthcare settings found that they are highly effective but that only two studies were in obstetrics. Both were based in the USA, one was in medical students (rather than qualified practitioners) and in the other one, the intervention lasted only 10 minutes. I think it
would be worth referencing this paper and highlighting the need for evidence-based news delivery training in maternity services:


Page 15: The authors refer to the need to consider the timing of inviting bereaved parents into research. Can any specific recommendations/advice/timelines be offered here? This is a crucial issue which funding committees and ethics committees pick up, and specific guidance would be welcome.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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.

None
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