Reviewer’s report

Title: Living with osteoarthritis is a balancing act: An exploration of patients' beliefs about knee pain

Version: 0 Date: 05 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Shreya Prasanna

Reviewer's report:
This manuscript is a qualitative study exploring the beliefs of people with knee osteoarthritis (OA) about the condition and their experiences with it. People were found to experience uncertainty about the symptoms of OA and its impact on their daily living and found it a difficult balancing act managing OA. There are several issues that need to be addressed before the manuscript can be considered for publication.

Introduction:
1. The 'bone on bone' phrase is too colloquial to be used in the introduction. Please rewrite this using scientific language. (line 12, Pg. 3)

2. The rationale for the study seems weak. As the authors mention earlier in the introduction, there are already several studies qualitatively examining beliefs about knee OA. What is special about this study? Is the study trying to explore these beliefs from a different perspective, that has never been discussed before? Is there a difference between people in New Zealand and people in previous studies i.e. a cultural context? These aspects need to be fleshed out to strengthen the argument. (lines 19-24, Pg.3)

Methods:
1. Are these two cities or two provinces? Please specify. (line 9, Pg.4)

2. Was there an age limitation in the inclusion criteria? (line 12, Pg.4)
Results
1. Participants were all middle aged or seniors. Was that deliberate or did the researchers not find participants in the younger age group? Considering that the trajectory of onset of knee OA has been changing with people getting knee OA in their 30s and 40s, it would have been interesting to recruit them as well. (Table 2)
2. While conceptually different, the authors should have included the data about health system access and support in this paper. How does healthcare access impact living with OA? How do knowledge and beliefs impact access? Does culture play a role? What are the contextual factors contributing to this? These are questions the authors could consider exploring, if they have sufficient data. (line 21, Pg. 6)
3. This section should be detailed under 'living with OA'. (lines 15-19, Pg. 8)

Discussion
1. It is unclear in the results where 'belief formation' was discussed. Please consider including it under a separate section. (line 23, Pg. 12)
2. All the concepts discussed in this study have been previously published. Please explain how this study and its findings adds to the literature.

Figure 1: It is not clear what the authors intend to show in this graphic. Please modify the figure accordingly.

Supplementary Material 1 & 2
1. It would be better to keep same sub-sections in the result section and supplementary material to ensure consistency.

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.
Yes
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.
I am able to assess the statistics

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
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