Reviewer's report

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

Version: 0 Date: 14 Feb 2018

Reviewer: David Spitaels

Reviewer's report:
Comments to the Author:

1/ Overall comment:
Interesting article. The methodology is clearly described and in accordance with the COREQ checklist, but I have some questions regarding patient recruitment and the use of the Oxford Knee Scale.

Two themes are presented in the result section: 'knowledge' and 'living with osteoarthritis'. I think the main focus should be on the second theme, since the belief in a biomechanical model of ongoing deterioration has already been mentioned in multiple previous studies(1, 2).
I think the implications for future practice should focus on the second paragraph (p 15, line 15): "Information provided to people with OA should focus on living with OA rather than biomedical aspects of the disease..."

2/ Specific comment:
I have some specific questions concerning the patient recruitment and data collection:
*P 4, line 29: do you have information if the diagnosis of knee OA was based on clinical and/or radiological criteria? In order to make an assumption on the severity of the osteoarthritis. This will influence the treatment options and especially conservative treatment options.
Based on table 2, I would say you interviewed mainly patients with chronic established knee osteoarthritis (with exception of one patient, all had pain more than 6 months). Off course, pain is insufficient as only clinical criterion for the diagnosis.
P 4, line 30: It is not specifically mentioned, but was knee prosthetic surgery an exclusion criteria to participate?

P5, line 2: The Oxford Knee Scale was used. This tool for patient reported outcome assessment has been developed to evaluate knee replacement surgery or to evaluate other types of interventions?(3) Can you explain the choice for this outcome assessment tool? Did all interviewed patients received surgery? You could also have used: KOOS, RAND-36, SF12,… to assess patient reported outcomes.

P5, line 38: data analysis: overall, the criteria for reporting qualitative research are met in this study, but I miss a reference to the COREQ checklist in the text.

P12, line 44: the conclusion of this theme, were patients want to delay surgery is in contrast with the conclusion of the previous theme that's says surgery is inevitable (what would implicate that nothing can be done…) mentioned on P 10, line 1. On the other hand, this discrepancy is addressed in the discussion.


**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.
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