Peer Review Report

Review Report on Stigmatized Stroke? A Qualitative Study of Perception of Stroke Among Residents with Hypertension

EVALUATION

Q 1   Please summarize the main findings of the study.

This study used qualitative design including interview data and focus group. Semi-structured interview was used and 16 homebased hypertension participants were included. The analysis encompasses themes, sub-themes and categories. The study was conducted in China and the authors find 3 themes: 1. Find out stroke as obviously physical disable (with sub-themes appearance and skill deficits), 2. Opinion of stroke as bad thing (sub-themes consequences of non-discipline, the burden of being loathe, karma, examples of vigilance), 3. Reaction towards stroke – stay away (sub-themes avoidance and prevention). The authors concluded that there is stigma, also in population of patients with hypertension and that public education about the stroke can be significantly important for the wider population.

Q 2   Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

This study represents an important paper which opens an innovative and sometimes disturbing topic such as the stigma associated with a serious illness, especially an illness that is often the cause of disability. Taking hypertension, which is often highlighted as the main risk factor, and analyzing the interviews, this paper can represent a significant contribution to the debate on this important public health topic.

Q 3   Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

Major comments:
• The introduction reveals the importance of the topic and the seriousness of the problem. However, if it could be further clarified why people with hypertension would be the ones worth studying in this context of stigma related to stroke.
• The paper would be more readable and clearer if the aim could be reworded a bit. Formulated this way, it gets a little vague.
• In the methodological part, could you explain which mental disorders are referred to when mental disorders are mentioned in the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
• The discussion is very interestingly written and forms an interesting part of the article. If it could be further expanded, what kind of education could be useful with special emphasis on the importance of peer support for people with hypertension and stroke if there is such data in the literature.

Minor comments:
• Although I am not a native speaker myself, I believe that the language could be improved in order to make the paper clearer and more readable.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4   Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes, the title is appropriate and concise.

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes, the keywords are appropriate.

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

It is of sufficient quality, but if it would be improved that would be great.

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes, it looks like that reference list cover the relevant and up-to-date literature.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9	Originality	■ ■ ■ ■ ▢ (4/5)
Q 10	Rigor	■ ■ ■ ■ ▢ (4/5)
Q 11	Significance to the field	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ (5/5)
Q 12	Interest to a general audience	■ ■ ■ ■ ▢ (4/5)
Q 13	Quality of the writing	■ ■ ■ ■ ▢ (4/5)
Q 14	Overall scientific quality of the study	■ ■ ■ ■ ▢ (4/5)

REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Minor revisions.