

# Review of: "Pain Assessment and Management in Children at Lusaka Children's Hospital: Nurses' Experiences - A Qualitative Study"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

## Overall comments

Thank you for the opportunity to review your paper. I'm always interested in papers looking at nurses' involvement in pain management in children and really pleased to see work being undertaken in Lusaka.

It's not clear if this paper is presented as a short report but, at present, it is very condensed, and a lot of the detail that I would expect, even in a short report, is missing.

I always want to be positive as a reviewer but the paper - as it stands - is not of a high quality. The underlying study may be OK but the reporting is seriously flawed. I've made a lot of comments below that are aiming to provide helpful guidance and suggestions for improving the paper.

For the most part it feels like the paper is reporting the findings from the focus groups - so the data are primarily qualitative. There are useful checklists that can be used to help support high quality reporting of qualitative data. I appreciate that not everyone loves these checklists but they do provide useful guidance on what needs to be included in a report/paper about a qualitative study. I'd strongly suggest that you look at COREQ for guidance <https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/coreq/>

I wish you luck with making revisions to your paper.

## Abstract

In your abstract, I'd suggest that you provide a bit more detail about the methods, for example, how many nurses took part (and were the same nurses involved across the questionnaires and focus groups), how many questionnaires completed, how many people took part in focus group discussions and how many case files reviewed.

I'm not sure that the final sentence of the abstract is needed. I'd suggest deleting this [This report is part of the mixed-methods study conducted.].

## Introduction

The introduction needs to be extended and supported with relevant references. At the moment the introduction consists of

3 sentences and the aim. Present something about the challenges children face and why - draw on the relevant literature to make your case. Provide some more detail about the role nurses play - why is it vital. How well do they do this based on findings from other studies. What is your evidence for pain management being under-addressed/under-prioritised in low-resource settings. Is this any different to other better resourced settings?

## Methods

You need to provide some more detail on the type of study. In the Abstract you mention it is a mixed-methods study - can you explain what you mean by this (e.g.. mixed qual and quantitative and if so, what type of mixed methods design see for example Cresswell or is it a mix of different qualitative approaches?)

Typically, an ethics approval number is provided.

## Participants

Please can you provide information about how participants were recruited (and consented) and how they were approached. Please provide more detail about information sheets and consent.

What type of sampling did you use?

## Procedures

How many participants invited to FGs? Where questionnaires distributed before/after FG. Why did you need both a questionnaire and FGs - what was the focus of each of these methods? How did you develop the questions for FGs and questionnaires. The reader will need a lot more information before they can start to understand your data. You say you were interested in experiences, attitudes and beliefs but you don't explain how you have explored these areas.

What type of questionnaire - type of questions used (e.g. open/closed etc).

Who ran the FGs and were these people known to the participants?

## Data collection

When did you do the data collection? Where were the FGs held?

## Data analysis

It's unclear how content analysis could be used to analyse data from a questionnaire? You also need to provide some more detailed explanation of type of content analysis and how you want from basic content to themes. Did your aim (nurses' experiences and perspectives on pain management in children, focusing on their knowledge, attitudes, and practices) guide your approach to analysis?

## Results

You need to provide detailed information about the number and demographics of the participants. Without this the reader

is completely in the dark about how to contextualise findings.

You need to provide some sort of explanation of what you mean by the labelling e.g. (FGD3 P6) - I can work out that this is probably participant 6 from FG 3 but I've no idea which of the three groups of nurses was in FG3.

You don't seem to report any of the findings from the questionnaire. If you are only reporting FG data, then make this clear much earlier on.

In the results/findings, you shouldn't be integrating references. You should leave integrating references and synthesising your findings with other research until the Discussion.

The themes are not presented in any detail and there is no use of illustrative quotes to support the statements you make. As such, there is no real evidence for the claims you are making.

This section, along with the others requires substantial reworking.

## **Discussion**

There is no Discussion presented in your paper which means that there is no sense of you presenting your findings/results in the context of other literature. This is a serious problem for the paper and you need to write a Discussion.

## **Conclusion**

Without major reworking of the paper, it is not possible to draw conclusions

## **References**

The list of references is limited and quite old and not all in-text references are presented in the final list There is a lot of really good contemporary literature that could be drawn on and this should be considered. I'm unsure on what has informed the choice of references drawn upon and there is little that seems to reflect the specific focus of the study which is 'experiences and perspectives on pain management in children, focusing on their knowledge, attitudes, and practices'.

## **Other comments**

I would suggest including appendices for the following items:

- Information sheet
- FG schedule/guidelines used in your study,
- Questionnaire used