PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE (PROVISIONAL)</th>
<th>Palliative care in the treatment of women with breast cancer: a scoping review protocol</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORS</td>
<td>Velasco Yanez, Romel; Carvalho Fernandes, Ana; Miranda Mattos, Samuel; Moreira, Thereza; Moura Barbosa Castro, Régia; Corpes, Erilaine de Freitas; LOPES-JÚNIOR, LUÍS CARLOS</td>
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GENERAL COMMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVIEWER</th>
<th>Filbet, Marilene</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>REVIEW RETURNED</td>
<td>21-Dec-2022</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This paper is a scoping study protocol. The aims of the study and the methodology are well described. The introduction chapter is well described, anyway I would suggest page 3 do not use the word "dignity" as this word is often used in a wrong way.

In the methodology section the number of participants of the focus group seems low, and there is no explanations about the number of participants needed. how do you justify to do such heavy research work as the is already recommendations for early palliative care (ASCO)?

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<tr>
<th>REVIEWER</th>
<th>Post, Kathryn</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital, Cancer Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>REVIEW RETURNED</td>
<td>12-Jan-2023</td>
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Overall comments - Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review this manuscript. Revision for language and clarity will be helpful for reviewers and readers to better understand the aims of this scoping review. Please consider the below comments. With revision, it could be a useful contribution to the literature.

Abstract: Please include which IRB approved this research.

Introduction:
1) Consider revising this section for language and clarity.
2) Please add citations to substantiate evidentiary claims. For example, on page 3, "it is estimated that 40 million individuals require PC annually."
3) The high number of breast cancer diagnoses is mentioned, but do all of these patients require or receive PC?
4) The paragraph on page 3, starting on line 29 discusses how a diagnosis of breast cancer negatively affects the lives of women and how PC aims to improve their quality of life. But PC is more commonly recommended for women with advanced breast cancer - what population are you describing here? Need to specify and clarify in your description of study eligibility. The end of the introduction
seems to suggest you will be searching for studies of women with advanced breast cancer, but elsewhere it seems you will include any stage of breast cancer. Please revise the introduction for clarity.

5) Patients with advanced breast cancer or metastatic disease can be described as such and not typically as "end stage" - consider revising language for sensitivity.

Research Aim: Need to clarify if this study only looked at studies of women with metastatic/advanced breast cancer or did you include any type of breast cancer? This is not clear.

Context: It appears in this section you are including all stages of breast cancer in the review. Please clarify.

Limitations: Consider adding a limitations section to the manuscript if allowed by the journal. If allowed, consider adding additional limitations other than number of articles retrieved.

**VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE**

Reviewer: 1
Dr. Marilene Filbet, University of Pennsylvania

Comments to the Author:
- This paper is a scoping study protocol
- The aims of the study and the methodology are well described.
- Response: Thank you so much for your positive feedback.
- The introduction chapter is well described, anyway I would suggest page 3 do not use the word “dignity” as this word is often used in a wrong way.
- Response: Ok. Done!

-In the methodology section the number of participants of the focus group seems low, and there is no explanations about the number of participants needed.
- Response: We have addressed this comment. "It should be noted that The ACTIVE framework does not offer a specific recommendation on the number of stakeholders needed for the consultation, but mentions the importance of including at least three categories (in this consultation: patients, professionals and researchers). In addition, the reference of the number of stakeholders for this study was chosen based on study with a similar methodological design [49]. Thus, the specialists will include a breast cancer specialist, a PC specialist, and a scope review expert".
- how do you justify to do such heavy research work as the is already recommendations for early palliative care (ASCO)?
- Response: OK. Done! This question is answered in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the introduction section that we have added in this new version.

Reviewer: 2
Dr. Kathryn Post, Massachusetts General Hospital

Comments to the Author:
- Overall comments - Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review this manuscript. Revision for language and clarity will be helpful for reviewers and readers to better understand the aims of this scoping review. Please consider the below comments. With revision, it could be a useful contribution to the literature.
- Abstract: Please include which IRB approved this research.
- Introduction:
  1) Consider revising this section for language and clarity.
  - Response: OK. Done!
  2) Please add citations to substantiate evidentiary claims. For example, on page 3, "it is estimated that 40 million individuals require PC annually."
  - Response: OK. Done!
3) The high number of breast cancer diagnoses is mentioned, but do all of these patients require or receive PC?
Response: OK. Done! This issue was addressed in the fourth paragraph

4) The paragraph on page 3, starting on line 29 discusses how a diagnosis of breast cancer negatively affects the lives of women and how PC aims to improve their quality of life. But PC is more commonly recommended for women with advanced breast cancer - what population are you describing here? Need to specify and clarify in your description of study eligibility. The end of the introduction seems to suggest you will be searching for studies of women with advanced breast cancer, but elsewhere it seems you will include any stage of breast cancer. Please revise the introduction for clarity.
Response: OK. Please to check the paragraph 6 as well as “context” in the methodology.

5) Patients with advanced breast cancer or metastatic disease can be described as such and not typically as “end stage” - consider revising language for sensitivity.
Response: OK! Done! Thanks!
Research Aim: Need to clarify if this study only looked at studies of women with metastatic/advanced breast cancer or did you include any type of breast cancer? This is not clear.
Response: OK. Please to check the “context” in the methodology.

Context: It appears in this section you are including all stages of breast cancer in the review. Please clarify.
Response: Yes, all stages of breast cancer will be included, because this is a scoping review.
Limitations: Consider adding a limitations section to the manuscript if allowed by the journal. If allowed, consider adding additional limitations other than number of articles retrieved.
Response: Ok. Added.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVIEWER</th>
<th>Post, Kathryn</th>
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<tr>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital, Cancer Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>REVIEW RETURNED</td>
<td>25-Mar-2023</td>
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| GENERAL COMMENTS  | Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The authors present a protocol for a mixed-methods scoping review study with a qualitative focus group second phase. This work offers potential new insights into the state of the literature regarding palliative care for patients with breast cancer and incorporates stakeholders into the design. Nonetheless, there are several areas of the manuscript which require further clarification as noted below:
Introduction: The authors need to further edit the introduction for clarity and readability. As written, it is hard to follow. Also, references here could be updated. For example, statistics on cancer deaths are from 2020.
Research Aim: Similarly, the research aim should be revised for clarity and readability.
Eligibility: There is a comment under "context" that type of cancer is not limited, but this is restricted to patients with breast cancer only, please clarify. Additionally, the detailed pathologic description of breast cancer under "context" is likely not needed. The authors could simply state stage 0-4 breast cancer, or whatever stages they would like to include.
Data Collection Technique and Instruments: It is noted that the focus group interviews will be recorded on mobile devices. How will privacy be ensured? Consider adding a comment describing this. Data Analysis: There is a sentence on line 30 that ends with "whereby" which I believe may be a typo? Please clarify. Please review here and throughout for similar issues. |
Scientific Rigor: It is stated that credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability criteria for qualitative research will be met. How will these be achieved? This must be described.

Patient and Public Involvement: Consider describing how patients were involved in this section. It is described briefly in a prior section but would be helpful here.

Discussion: Consider revising the second limitation.

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**VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE**

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author:
Introduction: The authors need to further edit the introduction for clarity and readability. As written, it is hard to follow. Also, references here could be updated. For example, statistics on cancer deaths are from 2020.
Response: English has been revised for better understanding. We have hired a company to proofread and edit the English. (New Horizons academic translators) (certificate attached). Regarding the references, the cancer statistics were updated.

Research Aim: Similarly, the research aim should be revised for clarity and readability.
Response: The main objective was divided into specific objectives considering the two stages of the study for greater clarity and readability.

Eligibility: There is a comment under "context" that type of cancer is not limited, but this is restricted to patients with breast cancer only, please clarify. Additionally, the detailed pathologic description of breast cancer under "context" is likely not needed. The authors could simply state stage 0-4 breast cancer, or whatever stages they would like to include.
Response: Ok. Adjustments were made as suggested. Thank you so much!

Data Collection Technique and Instruments: It is noted that the focus group interviews will be recorded on mobile devices. How will privacy be ensured? Consider adding a comment describing this.
Response: Thank you for your comment. It was clarified how the privacy of the target audience would be guaranteed.

Data Analysis: There is a sentence on line 30 that ends with "whereby" which I believe may be a typo? Please clarify. Please review here and throughout for similar issues.
Response: Ok. Adjustments were made as suggested. Thanks!

Scientific Rigor: It is stated that credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability criteria for qualitative research will be met. How will these be achieved? This must be described.
Response: We have added information about how scientific rigor criteria will be met.

Patient and Public Involvement: Consider describing how patients were involved in this section. It is described briefly in a prior section but would be helpful here.
Response: We have made adjustments to the paragraphs as suggested. Thank you for your valuable and careful revision.

Discussion: Consider revising the second limitation.
We have removed the discussion section as recommended by the Editor.

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**VERSION 3 – REVIEW**

REVIEWER Post, Kathryn
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<td><strong>GENERAL COMMENTS</strong></td>
<td>Thank you for your updates and edits to this manuscript.</td>
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