Reviewer's report

Title: Does single episode structured patient information during the intensive care unit stay reduce anxiety in ICU patients? A multicenter randomized controlled trial

Version: 2

Date: 1 December 2013

Reviewer: J. Randall Curtis

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written and well-conducted randomized trial of a brief structured nurse-driven educational intervention for patients in the ICU designed to improve patient anxiety. The study showed no consistent benefit of the intervention.

Minor essential revisions:

1. The introduction is choppy and could use revision to be more succinct and flow better.
2. Methods, page 9-11: The authors provide some information about their assessment of the fidelity of the intervention and control discussions, but don’t provide enough detail to reassure the reader that there was fidelity – especially among the nurses conducting the control discussions.
3. Methods, page 9-10: The authors should comment specifically on whether the outcome measures have previously been demonstrated reliable, valid, and responsive to interventions.
4. Methods, page 11-12: The analyses seem appropriate including the approach to intention to treat and missing data.
5. Results, page 15, and Discussion, page 16: It does seem like there might be a signal for improvement in outcomes among some of the secondary outcome measures. The authors have taken a conservative approach by not commenting on this signal. However, I think it might be better to acknowledge that there may be a signal toward improvement, without changing the overall interpretation of the study results.
6. Discussion, page 17, 2nd paragraph: The second paragraph on page 17 could be shortened. I think the authors can make their point without providing this much detail about the prior studies of TISS and SAPS II.
7. Table 4: This table should make it clearer as to when these outcomes were measured. Perhaps the table could be divided into sections based on the time point.
8. Table 5 and 6: These tables provide useful information, but could be in an online supplement or appendix.
Level of interest: An exceptional article

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no conflicts.