Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Inclusion of migrant and Danish-born cancer patients in research in a hospital setting: methodological challenges and lessons learned

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 14 July 2009

**Reviewer:** Douglas MacPherson

**Reviewer’s report:**

1. **Is the question posed by the authors well defined?**

The authors have raised an important and recurrent issue relevant to migrants and health. The answer provided was determined by circumstances arising during the study period that caused a deviation from the original purpose of the study.

Major compulsory revision required: this report is less about migrants, health and the results of in-patient survey on psychosocial issues, and almost entirely about "a qualitative assessment of implementing a cross-cultural survey on in-patient cancer wards in Denmark - a description of barriers". A change in title and re-focusing of the paper will better reflect the re-purpose, methods, results and discussion.

Note: this does not diminish the importance of the original question nor the discussion of the supporting literature, but migrants' health status was not an a priori requirement nor result of the study described.

2. **Are the methods appropriate and well described?**

The qualitative assessment requires more description and if possible validation in the data collected, analyzed and interpreted, and reported. For example, was the nursing orientation scripted; how were the interactions/questions recorded during the training sessions; was there more than one observer; what inducements or incentives for nursing participation were part of the study design? In the post-survey assessment and staff interviews, how were the representatives selected; how were staff excluded from interview; were the questions scripted for each interview; was there more than one researcher/interviewer present per interview; how was the interview recorded; were the questions subjected to internal/external validation; was the interviewer also the interpreter of the interview?

3. **Are the data sound?**

This is a report of qualitative interviews and historical description of events (number of surveys posted (versus number surveys delivered by nursing staff, versus number of surveys returned/%completed), nursing strike).

There is limited qualitative data or information provided from the nursing...
observations and interviews. Re-focusing the paper will allow an enhanced presentation of the nursing barriers to in-patient survey implementation.

Quantitative data can also be enhanced (e.g., duration of nursing strike: impact on surveys delivered or administered: staff nursing vs. management nursing impact on survey delivery during the strike)

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Both qualitative and quantitative data could be presented in greater detail to assist the reader in knowing the depth and breadth of the information available, accessed, and analyzed.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

The discussion is focused on the primary question of migrants and health but the actual paper is about something else. The authors have a potential opportunity to delve into the internal barriers to research design and implementation within their setting, and to propose solutions (secondary research questions) to resolve those barriers. The external challenges (nursing strike; training and attitudes to research on in-patient clinical service wards; funding and staffing levels; community wait-time expectations; prioritizing multiple tasks and academic requirements) are also amenable to research questions but may benefit from a specific design to address those issues.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

A re-focusing of the paper will bring those issues into greater relief.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Yes. As above, the citations in a re-focused paper may shift away from the migrant health literature to the study design and implementation of qualitative, psychosocial research in clinical settings including cross-cultural patient groups.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

No. See above.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

The writing style is excellent.

Other comment(s):

1. validation of the use of pre-determined surname as a selection criteria in the specific setting will be required. As ethnic homogeneity shifts due to foreign-born and local born generations, marriage, change in migrant population source and
demographics, or other causes the use of pre-determined surnames may lose specificity and precision. Generalizability will always be an issue with this design approach.

2. The researchers will need to ensure that surname is not related to other outcomes of interest related by socio-economics, behaviour, genetics or biology, or environmental determinants of health at the group or societal level within Denmark or the source country.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'

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