Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions of Doctor-Nurse Collaborative Practices by Patients with Multimorbidity: A Qualitative Study

Version: 1 Date: 18 February 2010

Reviewer: Judith G Baggs

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I. Major Compulsory Issues

The definition of collaboration used in this study to orient participants, "any intervention with a given patient involving at least one family doctor and one nurse in primary care," is inadequate. As the authors note, there is a large literature on collaboration. This does not begin to tap into the work that has been done. What if the nurse simply put the patient in a room, is that being involved? Or if the nurse is getting materials ready for a procedure to be performed by the physician, that might be cooperation but it is not collaboration.

II. Essential Revisions.

The level of the nurses' educational preparation is never defined, except to say that "nurse practitioner in primary care was not an acknowledged profession" when the study was conducted. What was the level of education of these nurses? If baccalaureate or less, then the patient concerns are absolutely legitimate. Nurses at that level should not be prescribing medications. The term "practicingnursing procedures" on page 12 implies to me, as a nurse in the US, that these were practical nurses, as we call them licensed practical nurses (LPNs). They would have 1 year or very practical skills-based education, and would be even less qualified than baccalaureate prepared nurses.

The interview guide is not included. It is impossible to tell why patient responses went so strongly to the issue of nurse competence.

What did nurses actually do in this setting?

It is not clear when in the interview the definition was provided.

The term "innovative" is used in the paper (p. 3), but depending on what nurses do in this practice, little that is innovative appears. If the nurses happened to actually be nurse practitioners, publications on the NP/primary care physician practice date back at least to 1984. (e.g., Physician-nurse practitioner interaction patterns in primary care practices. Lamb GS. Napodano RJ. American Journal of Public Health. 74(1):26-9, 1984 Jan.)

II Minor issues.

Page 6, paragraph 2. It is not clear what "The chronic conditions listed" means. Are they the patients' chronic diagnoses?
Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I edit a nursing research journal. I do not consider that to be a competing interest. I declare that I have no competing interests.