Reviewer’s report

Title: The Spiritual Distress Assessment Tool: An instrument to assess spiritual distress in hospitalised elderly persons

Version: 2 Date: 10 October 2010

Reviewer: Hsiu-Fang Hsieh

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  # Definition of face validity / content validity

I agree with the author that true assessment of content validity of the SDAT is difficult, which makes this manuscript valuable in contributing to our understanding of spirituality. Thanks to the author in providing a definition of face validity. Nevertheless, in contradictory to the definition provided by the authors, content validity is “measure of survey accuracy that involves formal review by individuals who are experts in the subject matter” (Litwin, 1995, p.82), while “face validity is based on a cursory review of items by untrained judges, such as your sister, boyfriend, or squash partner” (Litwin, 1995, p.35).

I am confused if the chaplains participated in the process of reviewing the SDAT were “already skilled in using the SDAT” (as in the original manuscript, p. 10) or “with no experience of the SDAT” (as in this revised manuscript, p. 7, 12).

Regardless, chaplains have some knowledge on spirituality. They are usually considered to be the expert on spirituality. I would suggest the authors to think again on the usage of the terms.

Moreover, given the importance of content validity in the development of instrument, it might not be acceptable to not address the content validity of the SDAT.

- Minor Essential Revisions: None.

- Discretionary Revisions: None.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.