Reviewer's report

Title: Can care of elderly be measured? Development of an assessment instrument to measure care needs in nursing homes for older people

Version: 1 Date: 30 June 2008

Reviewer: christa lohrmann

Reviewer's report:

The paper is about an instrument to assess care needs of older people in nursing homes. The topic is an important one and very relevant for nursing care.

I have some remarks for the authors which can be categorized under Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

1. Title:
My suggestion: please think about the title, if it reflects what your paper is about. You are writing about the psychometric testing and the modification of the TIC, so the instrument has already been developed.

2. Background:
You are writing about the instrument in the chapter background. I would recommend to add a special chapter "instrument" where you could give a brief description of the instrument, add a more detailed description of the TIC or add a figure. In your paper it is not clearly stated who should use the instrument e.g. nurses or nurse assistants, other professionals….? Are there any requirements like instructions or being acquainted with the patient for a certain time e.g. minimum of 24 hours before the assessment? Furthermore nothing is said about the development of the instrument, what is the basis for the items? When was the instrument developed and by whom?

3. Method part:
Please explain why there are 5 new items, what is the reason for adding them? Did you make a Delphi round? Were the nurses who use the instrument unsatisfied with the former version?

For a better understanding, please structure the analysis: explain what have you done to investigate the validity; what have you done to investigate the reliability.

Please explain what you mean by an "independent observer", is it a nurse, a doctor, a relative?

4. In the part about ethical considerations you state that the purpose of the study was quality assurance of care for the elderly. This is the first time that you are talking about this aspect in the manuscript. It is confusing for the reader what
your real aim of the study is: the development of the instrument, the testing and revision/modification of the instrument or quality assurance?

5. Discussion part:

Please discuss the results of the factor analysis; and compare it with other results (first factor analysis). Furthermore you are suddenly talking about a revised manual; this aspect was not mentioned before. What do you mean by stating that „a revised manual was used to support the reliability of the sampling process“?

Please discuss the reliability aspects in detail, a summary is not enough.

The explanation for the low agreement is not sufficient.

Furthermore, you are not explaining the differences of agreement in the 2 municipalities (rehabilitation, orientation)

6. Conclusion part: You are saying the instrument is simple to use. What does that mean, have you evaluated it e.g. with nurses/assistants in practice? What do you mean by saying the manual has been tested several times?

In your final sentence you state that the instrument can be recommended for use, please specify the reasons – shortly.

7. Limitations of the study are missing

One general comment: it is recommendable to give some examples of assessment instruments in the background part and not to write only about systems (the references are quite old!!) In the literature you can find a lot of instruments which assess needs, dependency and so on. The question is: why are you developing/modifying an instrument although there are already quite a few psychometrically tested instruments. What is "your" instrument adding??

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**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'