Reviewer’s report

Title: Can blended e-learning improve end of life care in nursing homes? A small-scale mixed-methods case study

Version: 2 Date: 29 January 2014

Reviewer: Suh-Ing Hsieh

Reviewer’s report:

1. Abstract
The author needs to directly point out the background of group C staff on the paragraph of significant [Major Compulsory Revisions].
#The pre and post course questionnaires and documentary analysis were needed to indicate the name of tools directly, i.e., the competencies questionnaire of end of life care, the knowledge test (freetext questionnaire), and patient record audit [Major Compulsory Revisions].
#The terms of “significant improvement” in participants’ confidence in delivering EOL and “wider change” in understanding in EOL should cautiously use on the paragraph of results in that the quantitative data only showed mean or percent without nonparametric statistical analysis [Major Compulsory Revisions].
#The terms of “significant transformations” in participants’ understanding of and confidence about EOL care should cautiously use on the paragraph of conclusions in that the quantitative data only showed mean or percent without nonparametric statistical analysis [Major Compulsory Revisions].

2. Background
The authors have indicated clear research problem and significance of this study.

3. Methods
#The content of methods were needed to reorganize as research design, participants and setting, instruments, the protocol, data collection, data analysis, and research ethics [Major Compulsory Revisions].
#The paragraph of participants and setting was lack of inclusion and/or exclusion criteria and a priori power analysis [Major Compulsory Revisions].
#The paragraph of instruments was lack of the name, purpose, development, operational definition, validity, and reliability of each quantitative instrument and trustworthiness of qualitative study. Items of subscales of the competencies questionnaire were difficult for healthcare assistants and others [Major Compulsory Revisions]. What are their roles, functions, and job descriptions of EOL care in England?
#The paragraph of the protocol (blended EOL training course) was needed to explain the course objectives and contents, teaching strategies and schedule, assessment before the protocol, and evaluation. In addition, the fidelity of the
protocol was needed to concisely describe. Did the blended training course provide learning content based on learners’ needs and background? Were there any opportunities for learners to practice during training period? [Major Compulsory Revisions]

#The analytic methods of quantitative and qualitative data were needed to clearly explain respectively [Major Compulsory Revisions].

4. Results

#Results of learner’s characteristics were not clearly stated or listed in a table. The result of Table 1 can be briefly described in the paragraph of methods [Major Compulsory Revisions].

#The results of confidence in EOL only showed mean on the second to fourth paragraph or four figures of the NHS SHA Questionnaire or percent on the fourth paragraph of the NHS SHA Questionnaire. If the small data meted the assumption of normality, the data could present mean and standard deviation. Thus, the data could be analyzed by paired t test for confidence levels at the pre-test and post-test. If the small data violated the assumption of normality, the data could be showed median and standard deviation. Therefore, the data could be analyzed by Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test [Major Compulsory Revisions].

#Figures were needed to provide clear vertical axis (mean score) and horizontal axis (items of competencies) [Major Compulsory Revisions].

#Barriers to change in practice were presented on the paragraph of results and discussion. Yet, there is no studied purpose for this paragraph [Major Compulsory Revisions].

5. Discussion and conclusions

#The content of discussion was needed to separate with results. Discussion was needed to be presented by explaining results, comparing with literature, and providing rationales for differences [Major Compulsory Revisions].

#Limitations of the study were lack [Major Compulsory Revisions].

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests' below.