Reviewer's report

Title: The integration of ICT to support the work of Nurse Practitioners: a multi-site qualitative study

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Reviewer: Ela Klecun

Reviewer's report:

This paper discusses and interesting and timely topic. It is of particular interest because it, unlike many other studies, describes a situation where ICT were successfully integrated into work practices by healthcare workers (in this case Nurse Practitioners). I also like the idea of disruptive innovations/technologies. However, this idea was not well developed in the paper and I'm not sure if it supposed to be central to the paper's argument.

I believe that the focus of the paper is on how ICT can support the work/roles of NC. The paper describes roles of NC and their use of ICT and illustrates arguments with brief examples.

Nevertheless, I feel that the case studies lack detailed insights on how ICT were integrated into workflows, communication practices etc. What problems were encountered and how were they overcome? The paper concludes that “integration of ICT into work practices without detraction from provider-patient interaction is central to realising potential benefits’ but there is very little in the paper (except for one paragraph) on the nature of those detractions.

This lack of detail might be due to a somewhat limited research. Perhaps more could have been revealed with observations?

Is ICT is enabler (rather than facilitator) through which the disruptive impact of NPs can be realised? The paper describes facilitating role of ICT but at in conclusions claims that ICT is ‘enabler’. There is a difference (for me). As facilitator ICT helps but as enabler it ‘makes possible’ (and is necessary). Could NPs role be achieved without ICT?

I also feel that the paper underestimated how much research has been done on the use of ICT by health professionals. There is a considerable literature on this topic in information systems journals (for example, recently special issues on the topic appeared in JAIS and ISR). I would like a brief literature review highlighting the main themes/issues central to the paper and discussed in different, relevant literatures.

In summary, I would like the following

Major Compulsory Revisions revisions:

1. Either to provide a more developed discussion of NC and ICT as disruptive innovations or to downplay those arguments.
2. In the description of results and discussion I would like a more in-depth discussion on how the integration of ICT into NC work took place and how it helped to achieve their (disruptive?) role. Specifically, I'm interested in how problems of power/politics/cultural differences were addressed. I understand that this is a lot to ask, and not everything can be discussed in detail. Perhaps the authors could mention some issues, and choose a few to develop further. How to approach this I would leave to the authors’ discretion.

Discretionary Revisions
1. A more thorough literature review (Background), highlighting main themes already discussed in the literature (even if this literature is not specific to Nurse Practitioner’s role, but discusses other health professionals’ use of ICT).

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Some typos/mistakes, e.g. on p 10 ‘less severe patients’; p 17 ‘offsite colleagues and telemedicine efforts’

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

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