Reviewer’s report

Title: Nurses’ and care workers’ experiences of spiritual needs in patients with dementia disease in nursing homes: a qualitative study.

Version: 4 Date: 23 December 2013

Reviewer: Nancy S Hogan

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The research aim is stated as “The aim of the study was to investigate nurses’ and care workers’ experience of spiritual needs among patients with dementia disease in nursing homes.” The aim is well stated and congruence with the method chosen to conduct this study. The literature review appears comprehensive and the need for the study is derived from the literature search.

The method of recruitment is justified and using several cites for data collection increases the potential usefulness of findings to institutions similar to the ones data were obtained from. This study did receive approval from Human Subjects Review Board to protect human participants.

There is congruence between the study aim and most other elements of the qualitative method. Specifically, it is unclear how the context of the study is related to the themes. For example, the abstract results section refers to the relational context as trust, safety and self-worth then identifies theme as “suitably involvement”, “search for belonging” and “faith expressions.” What is the relationship or meaning between the context of the findings and the themes?

This study was defined is sufficient detail to allow for replication among independent researchers. The recruitment and data collection section is well described as well as how the data analysis was carried out. There is a direct relationship between the method identified to guide this study and the manner in which this study was conducted.

The analysis and interpretation of data is plausible and adequate quotes to permit the reader to see that the data lead to the findings except for the issue stated above about the context of the study and the themes.

Authors refer to nurse’s perception of patients’ non-verbal behavior and state that there were some verbal expressions. It would interesting to have patients comments added were possible.

The limitation section shows thought in considering how the implementation focus groups is controversial and provides a reasonable rationale for using this method for data collection in this study.

Major Compulsory Revision: It is recommended that the relationship between the context of the study and themes be clarified. At this point these findings seem
independent.

The manuscript still needs some editorial help to make some of the meaning more clear, e.g. is the theme “suitably involvement” supposed to be suitable involvement?

A strength of the study is the timeliness of this study when dementia diagnoses are increasing worldwide and the need for evidence based interventions to care for this special population is needed.