Author's response to reviews

Title: Job satisfaction trends during nurses' early career

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Title: Job satisfaction trends during nurses’ early career

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Title: Job satisfaction trends during nurses' early career

Version: 1 Date: 5 December 2007

Reviewer: Mary Lynn

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript addresses an area that has received little previous attention â## the job satisfaction of the newly graduated nurse. Given the importance of job satisfaction this is relevant research.

Because these comments are essentially serial as the reader progresses through the manuscript they are not divided into major, minor and discretionary. Rather each comment is preceded by an M (major), N (minor) or D (discretionary).

M -However, it is not true that it has not been studied as can be noted in the following (among others):


We have made reference to these and others studies in the Background and in the section on Job satisfaction in early career.

M -Section on determinants of satisfaction â## given the mention of the determinants did you measure any of them? It would seem the rationale being presenting them in the background would be that you would also be focusing on them in some way.

We included some of the determinants mentioned for example age, spouse/partner, children and highest education qualification in the model as moderating variables.

N -3 paragraphs before methods â## there are some over time studies, including the Williams et al one noted above.

We refer to this and other studies in the Background and in the first paragraph of the section on Job satisfaction in early career.
Methods

M - Not clear why the full census of child and LD nurses were chosen and samples of the rest. Admittedly there will be fewer nurses in the child area but are there issues (not presented in the discussion) about sampling one group and going after all of the (or another) group? This should be addressed.

More precise details have been provided on sampling in the Methods section under the heading Sample. In the Discussion we comment on the implications that this will have on the sampling error.

N - There is no information on how the nurses were recruited, re-contacted and retained.

Under Data Collection details of the recruitment process and tracing of participants is provided.

M - Measure discussion is unclear when going from 34 36 items (why is there a range) to 20 items. What was the basis for the selection of the 20 items? The sentence that follows this (about then being applicable to 90% of respondents) needs explanation. What did the other 10% do? How did you know that they did or did not apply?

The section on the Job satisfaction measure has been expanded to provide more detail on the development of the instrument. The main reason why certain items were excluded from the psychometric analysis was because they did not apply to sufficient numbers of respondents, for example many respondents did not have a family or partner therefore items such as Combining work hours with responsibilities for children were only applicable to a minority.

M - Can there be a scale with 2 versions? (of course there can but this isn’t practical over time).

To avoid confusion and maintain clarity we have focused on just one measurement model. The two measurement models differed only on the location of one item and therefore we chose to present findings on the measurement model that was a better fit for 2 out of 3 branches.

N - What are the reliability estimates for the scales?

We comment on internal consistency which was good. We did not want to overburden respondents who had been asked to complete a series of large questionnaires with an additional questionnaire to test inter-rater reliability.
Correlations between measures at 6 months and 18 months were reasonable given the time lapse.

D â## Any comment on a single item measure for pay?

We comment on the single item for pay at the end of the section on Job satisfaction measure and in the Discussion there is a short paragraph where we advise that a second item Grade/position in relation to level of responsibility should be included after a reasonable period in work or alternatively we suggest using a generic pay instrument.

M -What is the rational for 6, 18 and 36 months?

The rationale for choosing 6, 18 and 36 months now appears in the Methods under the heading Design.

M -Need to justify allowing for as much as 50% missing data on a factor.

There is no set guideline on this although Bryman and Cramer used 50% or more.

N -What are the actual findings that support combining the datasets (2nd paragraph of analysis)?

This paragraph has been rewritten to state that non-response was not a major issue for these data and therefore separating the data by respondent group was not required.

M -What is the model composed of that is alluded to in the analysis?

No model has been presented.

Table 1 lists the items that locate under each factor.

Results

D -1st paragraph under results â## why not include these results here?
The first paragraph has been removed. Non response is now dealt with in the Data Analysis section

M - Is it relevant to compare results between folks who participated at all 3 times and those that did 2 only?

Relevance?

The only relevance was to see if non responders were the same as responders. On the whole they were.

M - The relevance of Table 3 and Figure 1 is not clear since the actual analysis done that included the moderating variables is not presented

The moderating variables made little difference to the overall findings except in a small number of cases therefore the findings presented in new Tables 3 and 4 and the new Figure 1 relate to the simpler model without moderating variables.

N - There is questionable need for the detail in the paragraph that starts

â##Some interesting variations in job satisfactionâ#!â##Discussion â##M- Reflect on reality shock. Does that help explain why there might be some differences?

This paragraph and the two that follow it have been removed.

M - Is it true at hiring that mental health nurses are older or otherwise demographically different at hiring?
Yes it is true. We have added Table 2 to show how profile variables differ between the branches.

If so how were these differences controlled for in the analysis?

These differences were controlled for in the analysis by including the moderating variables, shown in Table 2, in the model. (see also the last paragraph of the Data Analysis section) However, as stated above, they made little difference to the overall findings.

M -Discuss statistical differences versus practical ones ---Many of the findings here are small, but significant due to the sample size. They have limited practical meaning.

We have introduced the element of practical differences as opposed to statistical differences into the Findings and the Discussion with comments such as “although in real terms the differences were small” and “neither statistically significant nor substantial in real terms”

General note -An issue that occurs in a few places in the report -what are the findings that support the conclusion, next step, etc.

We have tried to make better connections between the Findings and the Discussion.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests 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
Reviewer's report
Title: Job satisfaction trends during nurses' early career

Version: 1 Date: 14 December 2007

Reviewer: Judith W Alexander

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting manuscript exploring job satisfaction in nursing from a new perspective—that of job satisfaction early in the nursing career. Some suggestions to improve the manuscript are given below.

**MAJOR COMPULSORY CHANGES**

- The theoretical background is good, but seems to be added on and not tied to the design of the study or interpretation of the results. Comments on how the theoretical material helps explain the results would enhance the presentation and improve probably of the use of the results in practice.

  We have made greater efforts to tie in the theoretical background to the Findings and the Discussion.

  - For Americans, the educational system (having many diploma nurses), the level of nurses (D,E,F), and the positions that nurses take upon graduation (adult, child, mental health, and learning disability) are unfamiliar and need some explanation for clarity purposes. What other entry into practice programs exist in the UK, and what proportion of nurses use these other programs? New graduates in the US, take positions in Medical-Surgical, Pediatric, Intensive Care, and Emergency Department nursing, while few take them in Mental Health. Additionally, I am uncertain what Learning Disability Nursing is.

  The second paragraph of Job satisfaction in early career provides more information on the UK nursing education programmes and we briefly describe what is expected of staff employed as D, E and F grades.

  - The sampling technique seems to indicate a national sample of all new graduates in the UK, but that is unclear. The number of sites and clinical units included in the study is not addressed. Given the large sample size, I assume that many sites were included.

  We have added more detail on the sample design in Methods under the heading Sample.
The data analysis and presentation is complicated, but generally well presented. However, I feel that the presentation could be re-organize to add clarity. The information presented in the text needs to be more clearly aligned with the tables. Material presented on pages15-16 (related to the demographics) is not given in a table and therefore difficult to follow. The sample was divided for analysis into one group with all responses (by calculations using missing data) and one group of those who completed all the surveys. Again it is unclear which table reflects which data set. The explanation of the figures is incomplete and the figures themselves seem to have more information than is discussed in the text. We have tried to address all the concerns raised above. The analysis relates to just one dataset – all respondents – and the issue of non-response has been dealt with in the Data Analysis section. The explanation of the findings that appear in the new Tables 3 and 4 is more detailed.

The paragraph that starts “Some interesting variations in job satisfaction” and paragraphs that follow that relate to demographics have been removed so that the findings have a tighter focus on trends.

Some discussion is needed of why the response rate declined with each time of administration. Is this just a normal situation of non-response in a longitudinal study or is it because nurses were no longer employed in the position they held originally? If in fact there was turnover in the three year period among the nurses early in their career, this fact would have implications for the analysis of job satisfaction. We have attempted to address the issue of non-response in the Methods section under the headings of Sample and Data Analysis section and briefly describe some analyses that were conducted to explore this. Yes it is correct to say that non-response is common to most longitudinal postal surveys.

On page 19, the statement is made â##the greater opportunities to move between jobs in early career will diminish as time goes on and this may well impact on the longer-term job satisfaction of this particular cohort.â## WHY? This sentence has been removed.

As presented, the study is purely descriptive. The additional of discussion of some implications for nurse leaders on HOW to use this information to improve the job satisfaction of (and perhaps ultimately retain) nurses early in their careers would be helpful. In the second last paragraph of the Discussion we provide some suggestions on how early career nurses can be supported

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

Reference needed to support content in first paragraph in the Background section
The first paragraph now contains a number of references
  o On page 10, the first time MREC is mentioned, the acronym needs to be defined.
  MREC has been spelt out in full Multi-Centre Research Ethics Committee.
    o Cronbachâ##'s is misspelled on page 19
  Spelling has been corrected.
    â_CITY DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS
    o None

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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 have not competing interests