Reviewer’s report

Title: Improving long-term care provision: towards demand-based care by means of modularity

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Reviewer: Chris Voss

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Improving long-term care provision: towards demand-based care by means of modularity

Overall, this is an excellent, well written and researched paper. Apart from a number of comments on the written English, I have only two substantive comments. Once these are addressed, I would recommend publication.

Main Comments

The research questions

The research questions (RQs) are written as one sentence separated by besides. These RQs should be stated separately.

The first RQ is good

The second RQ needs revisiting. It does not seem to be consistent with the analysis in the paper. For example, the conclusion on p 32 states “this study aimed to investigate the potential of modularity in moving the sector of long-term care towards the objective of demand based provision”. A better RQ might be “What is the potential of modularity in moving the sector of long-term care towards the objective of demand based provision?”

Consistency and relationship of terminology

The paper carefully sets up the concept of modularity, components and interfaces as the underpinning theoretical basis.

As the authors point out, in practice there is a different and varying use of technology including package, category, sub-category, prototype package, core components, care parts. The relationship and equivalence between these was not always clear to the reader. The use and definition of these terms should be carefully checked

“Prototype package”. The use of the word “prototype” would seem to be inappropriate here, unless this is the exact word used by the case companies. The word prototype is normally used to mean such things as:

a first full-scale and usually functional form of a new type or design of a construction (as an a Airplane) or a service

a new type of machine or device or service which is not yet ready to be made in large numbers and sold.
This does not seem to be the meaning of the use in the paper. Should it be “standard package”, “base package” or something different?

Page 17 para 2

“our data indicated that there are other ways of reorganizing components” It is unclear what these other ways are. Is it what is said in the next sentence? If so, this needs spelling out more clearly.

Comments on written English.

This is generally very good, but there are few areas for improvement

P 1 last paragraph. The word “Besides” would be better if replaced by “In addition”. This is generally true throughout the paper

P5 para 1 lines 3 and 6 ..the elderly…

P9 last para.

Line 2. Replace “eased” with “have been found to ease”.

Page 11 second para

line 4 change unity to uniformity

line 7. I am not sure what you mean by registered

Page 13 last para line 2 should be ..voluntarily…

Page 14

lines 4 and 5 – delete. Finish the sentence at ..conducted.

line 12 replace “worked out” with written out

Page 16

para 2 line 6. Change ..experienced… to ..found..

para 3 line 7 add a comma after… each case,

Page 17 para 1, line 6 (and elsewhere)

“blueprint” is not the right word. “Structure” might be better

Box 1 line

What are “projects”? It may be better to use another word such as cases

Change have to had

Page 19 case 4

Line 2 Change .. it was therefore chosen .. to They therefore chose

Line 4. Take out the commas before and after thus

Page 21 – line 11. …were encouraged… Who or what encouraged?

Box 2 line 9 and elsewhere (figure 2)

The phrase “a-priori” is incorrect for his usage. Its normal usage in English is

An a priori argument, reason, or probability is based on an assumed principle or fact, rather than on actual observed facts.
You need to find a word/phrase that more accurately describes this phase
Page 23 Box 2 last line change subsequent to sequential
“take in figure 2” – should not be in the main box
Page 24/25 – “a bridge too far”. This seems to be used inappropriately. It implies that either we will never be able to reach it, or everyone has tried to reach it but failed. Use a more accurate phrase such as “a challenge”, “a challenge for the future” etc.
Last para lines 1 and 2 range of …. Processes.
Page 27
line 1 Cut ..Besides,.. Change to It might also allow
line 5 This would enable (who?) to more easily…
Final paragraph
-line 1 change variation to variety
Lines 6,7 would it be better to say ..services that meet their particular needs
Line 13 based on our insights
Page 28 line 12. Replace besides with ..in addition.. Also next page line 4
Last line change “in which it is determined to” for determining”
Page 29 para 2 line 4 cut still

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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 declare that I have no competing interests