Reviewer's report

**Title:** Perspectives of staff nurses about the reasons for and nature of patient-initiated call-lights: An exploratory survey study in four U.S. hospitals

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 24 November 2009

**Reviewer:** June H Larrabee

**Reviewer's report:**

Major Compulsory Revisions

This interesting research report needs further development before being ready for publication. Developmental comments follow.

1. In the introduction, introduce and theoretically define the concepts in your Figure 2.

2. The Theoretical Framework section needs further development. Articulate that Figure 1 is based on the review of literature. Right now, it appears to be in isolation, not linked to preceding content, with the exception of the word “consequently.” Discuss the NQF classifications on performance measures in the introduction and link Figure 2 to that discussion. Because you did not investigate proposed relationships in Figure 2, explain what you mean when you say it “guided this study.” That is not self-evident between reading the narrative and the table. It is not yet clear that you need this figure. Define your concepts in this section and, in the Data Sources section, operationalize them, describing the items used to measure them. This will provide rationale for the analysis, especially for the four regression models.

3. The purpose section needs editing. The second sentence is about measurement and belongs in the Data Sources section. The third sentence lists candidate predictors (demographic variables) that you should discuss at the end of the introduction in a way that justifies using them as candidate predictors. There needs to be better transition from the literature review to the research questions. It is not yet clear why you developed all of these research questions. The last sentence in this paragraph is redundant with content in the Methods section and should be deleted.

4. In the Design section, with the exception of the first three sentences and last sentence, the content is results and should be in the results section.

5. In the Sample section, provide rationale for your decision to use a convenience sample.

6. In the Data Sources section, provide a brief discussion about how the items were generated. Briefly discuss the items used to measure your concepts, referring to them by number on Table 1. This will clarify their correspondence. In your second sentence in this paragraph, you state that the demographic variables were measured “for documentation purposes;” yet, they are candidate predictors too, thus, that statement is contradictory.
7. In the Data Analysis section, add the adjective “candidate” in front of predictor variables.

8. In the Answers to Research Questions section, remove the results statistics because you have those in Table 2. Research question 1, last sentence: why do you need to report on results of just one hospital? For better readability, insert a paragraph break in front of the heading for the answer to research question 3. In the section for the answer to research question four, after removing the stats, rearrange the results in descending order of frequency and orient the reader to that ordering. In the research question 5 section, reword the first sentence to state that results of these regression models are presented in table 3. For the first regression model, emphasize that there was only one predictor. For the rest of the regression models, first name all the concepts that were predictors and THEN the interpretation. Right now, you just have the interpretation and it would be helpful to first know the concepts that were predictors, followed which response category was different from the others. That editing will greatly enhance understanding. Insert a paragraph break in front of presentation of the second regression model.

9. In the Discussion section under answer to question 1, why limit the discussion to just one of the top 3 reasons? Couldn’t rounding apply to number 2 & 3? The last sentence under question 5 paragraph lacks clarity and is a non-parallel form sentence. In the next paragraph, additional discussion should address the idea of further instrument development to develop items that inquired about tasks that needed to be handled by a nurse vs. an aide as the most appropriate helper.

10. In the Discussion section, you should discuss why you think some of the candidate predictors were NOT predictors, based on your earlier justification of using them as candidate predictors.

11. The discussion of threats to internal validity is underdeveloped.

Discretionary Revisions

12. Although you have clearly focused on patient safety, the issue of timeliness of answering call lights has been demonstrated to be a factor in patient satisfaction in acute care hospitals. That further emphasizes why Chief Nurse Executives and Administrators should address timeliness. It would enhance the introduction and discussion sections to include some discussion of the evidence related to patient satisfaction.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.