Reviewer’s report

Title: Measuring client experiences in long-term care in The Netherlands: the Consumer Quality Index (CQ-index(R)) Long-term Care

Version: 1 Date: 11 September 2009

Reviewer: Christopher B Forrest

Reviewer’s report:

General
This manuscript presents the development and psychometric evaluation of an instrument that purports to measure the experiences of individuals in long-term care. It is part of a larger quality assessment effort, which has produced a variety of other service sector specific tools.

Compulsory
1. The number of institutions that participated in this project is impressive. Please provide some information on how they were selected and then recruited?

2. Given that the instrument is in the public domain, I strongly urge you to provide an Appendix with all the items, their wording, their response formats, how they are scored, and their descriptive statistics. This will encourage to use and build on your work.

3. I was unclear on the conceptual framework that was used, how it was developed, and what its theoretical underpinnings are. Elaborating the conceptual framework should be the first sub-section of your methods.

4. What qualitative techniques were used in item development? I did not see any mention of focus groups to generate items or validate with consumers the conceptual framework. Also, you mention testing “clarity” of items, but do not present any cognitive interviewing data. If these were not done, please comment on this in the discussion, and address how your instrument may be incomplete or even biased (particularly without cognitive interviews among elders). In our work with children (other end of the age spectrum!), we have found cognitive interviews to be critical to scale development.

5. You should mention that this instrument was developed using classical test theory. Modern measurement approaches would be a next step. Frankly, I would have like to have seen IRT in this paper.

6. These scales are incomplete – their validity cannot be said to be supported – without differential item functioning. I encourage you to run those analyses and consider excluding those items with significant DIF.

Discretionary
7. Can these scales be used outside the Netherlands? Please discuss.

8. An alpha cut point of .6 is lower than the standard of .7; please justify.

9. Please justify the criteria you used and the cut-points for item exclusion or modification.

There is a fair bit of text that is repetitive with Table 2. Consider deleting most of this.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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.