Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Edeltraut Kröger

Reviewer's report:

This publication concerns a very interesting area of research. Valid measures for the assessment of the quality of long-term care are urgently needed, and from my understanding the presented CQ-index in long-term care is already in use in the Netherlands.

However, I do have some problems with the way the validation process is presented in the paper. In my opinion, there should be more information on how this specific index was constructed, i.e. how the choice of the scales/questions was completed and on the results of psychometric testing.

Introduction
For the sake of the time of the reader, this section could be shortened.

Methods
1) Residents of residential homes or nursing homes receive “somatic care”? This term need to be introduced more clearly, here in the beginning of the methods section.

2) Was there a use of focus-groups or other means of coming to a consensus regarding the choice of items?

3) What was the role of the survey vendors? I am not familiar with that term.

4) Why was the assessment of satisfaction disregarded? I would like to see an argumentation.

Analyses:
5) I would like to see more detail on the psychometric testing of the instrument. This point will somewhat apply to the results section as well.

6) The aims of the analyses referring to the pilot study, i.e. paragraphs 2 and 3 of this section, are not quite clear

7) The paragraph beginning with "Finally..." is unclear; it does not really refer to statistical analyses of validation but to a method to improve the instrument.

Results
Survey data
8) I do not understand why 29% of the somatic ward patients, with psychogeriatric problems or dementia, had to be excluded since mail questionnaires to the principal responsible caregiver could have done (were done??). It is important to be sure that care to dementia patients can well be assessed with the present CQ-index, since dementia patients form an important part of the long-term care clientele.

9) While much detail is given about how the pilot test was carried out and how it succeeded; results for the psychometric tests are missing.

Scales of the questionnaire
10) Please give more critical detail for the results relating to the scales of the questionnaires.

Evaluation of the pilot
11) This part could be somewhat more concise and shortened.

Discussion
12) Page 18, first paragraph: please give some quantitative results as well and shorten the paragraph.

13) Page 19, second paragraph: the discussion of response rate (i.e. selection bias) and the possibility for general use of the questionnaires is a bit unclear: these two aspects are discussed together and it may be easier to discuss them separately.

14) Page 20, paragraph 1: it may be good to have a “box” with the recommendation for further surveys using the CQ-index.

15) A paragraph comparing the CQ-index to other quality measurement questionnaires would add credibility to the results of this validation study.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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.