Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers to effective discharge planning: perspective from frontline healthcare professional in a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Chen-Wei Yang

Reviewer’s report:

This paper tries to explore barriers and components of effective discharge planning in Hong Kong’s health care context. Owning to lack of system-wide discharge planning policy in Hong Kong, the authors attempt to fill this need by qualitative study in healthcare sector. The result shows four categories of barriers and related solutions for effective discharge planning. The topic is interesting in practical and this paper seems to contribute novelty insight for discharge planning study in Honk Kong’s healthcare context. However, my general concern is that both of the theoretical background and methodology of this paper is not as rigid as expected, the following comments are suggested to be improved or clarified for further improvement.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. As to the theoretical parts, first, the theoretical gap or contribution about discharge planning is unclear in this paper. Second, in page 6, the definition of ‘a systematic approach’ or a ‘framework’ to develop discharge planning is also confusing.

2. As to the methodology, first, in theme one, the logic to classified four barriers remains unclear in this paper. The specific scope and definition for each barrier factor is necessary. Similar problems exist in theme 2. There are no clear categories for the components for effective discharge planning. Second, the unit of analysis in this paper is unclear. There are industry level, organization level and individual level exist in this paper. Third, since this paper is induced oriented, adopting the process of the approach of grounded theory for establishing important concepts, categories and propositions is highly suggested.

3. As to the results, I think the recruitment of government participants is helpful for discharge planning policy making. Second, the description of policy implications is necessary at the end of this paper.

Finally, since this paper has provided limited improvement on its quality, I think the quality of the existing work may not meet acceptable standards of your journal now. However, the proper improvement both in methodology and theory is needed for future publication concerns.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
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'