Reviewer's report

**Title:** Variations in risk perceptions: A qualitative study of why unnecessary urinary catheter use continues to be problematic

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 13 December 2012

**Reviewer:** Kay Currie

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an interesting and highly relevant research topic; the selected theoretical framework used to guide analysis is appropriate and the authors add usefully to this framework. However, the work has several limitations which should be addressed prior to a publication decision, the most pertinent of these being that the interpretation is presented as reflective of the risk assessment and actual care practice of bedside clinicians or staff nurses, whereas the data presented is that of the opinion or assumptions of senior clinicians (infection preventionists, Directors of Nursing, Clinical specialists) about the decisions and practice of these staff nurses; there is very little evidence presented which reflects the decisions made by those involved in direct care delivery.

**Discretionary Revisions** (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. The introduction refers only to USA data and guidance; the authors may wish to make reference to international evidence e.g. UK or Europe
2. The theoretical framework used to analyse data appears appropriate, however further details or some level of critique of this framework would add conviction to the analysis

**Minor Essential Revisions** (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. There are minor typos e.g. p 6 line 10 – should ‘hospitalists’ be preventionists?; p.6 line 12 in order TO compare

**Major Compulsory Revisions** (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Further detail about how the intervention was implemented in different organisations would be helpful to contextualise the study e.g. was there any structured staff education or training associated with the initiative; was there a change in documentation or other trigger for change.
2. Overall, data appear to support the interpretation; however, the authors should reconsider referring to data extracts as illustrating practice in two ‘hospitals’; they demonstrate views from two practitioners; there is no evidence presented to indicate the views are representative across different organisations.
3. I would like to see data from staff nurses, rather than infection preventionists to support the assertion that urinary catheters are for nurse convenience (p10); if there is no such data then this interpretation should be presented as a perception of preventionists, not as evidence of nursing care practice. The same comment holds for other themes i.e. it appears that infection preventionists and clinical specialists are providing views on the care provided by staff nurses, with no evidence presented by the staff nurses themselves. Therefore, the interpretation is based on senior practitioners’ perception/opinion of risk assessment and catheter practice of staff nurses and does not represent the actual risk assessments of staff nurses themselves. This is a disappointing limitation of the study; however as long as the findings are acknowledged as the assumptions of senior staff and not necessarily providing evidence representative of actual clinical practice, then the results are still of interest.

4. Some mechanisms for labelling the data extracts to identify origin should be used in addition to just identifying the type of practitioner; it is not clear e.g. whether the ‘infection preventionist’ or ‘trauma nurse specialist’ quotes come from the same or from different individuals in those roles, this lack of auditability further limits the rigour of the study.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance 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'