Reviewer's report

Title: A cross-national survey on patient safety culture: Japan, Taiwan and the U.S.

Version: 2 Date: 28 August 2012

Reviewer: Peter Spurgeon

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Major Compulsory Revisions

The paper addresses an important conceptual issue i.e. the degree to which an inherently culturally based measure can transfer meaningfully across countries and thereby culture. There is also some valuable data here. However, the paper is limited in its capacity to extract meaningful interpretation.

The authors adopt a quasi scientific style of simply reporting scores and unfortunately there are so many across the three countries with a host of “a bit higher here, lower here, higher there, those two higher than the third” etc that overall one is lost as to what is the message about patient safety culture. The topic needs a higher order interpretation. For example there are many more or less nurses represented in the samples across the countries- does this matter, do nurses have an influence on the observed pattern? There is no comment when it may be key to understanding what the numbers mean.

A large number of hospitals exist in each country sample and clustering of high PSC scoring groups in each country might be very revealing. As the authors conclude “The results suggested that the PSC could vary among different countries as well as hospitals”. So both country and institution could be an influence but I am not clear how, particularly in respect of the latter. It reads rather like a Ph.D. where the data is reported and the discussion is held over.

Minor Essential Revisions

The English style is stilted and this sometimes makes it difficult to understand exactly. Once the key messages of the data are discerned the paper needs to revised probably with a native English speaker involved. There is material here that is useful and relevant but it doesn’t come over as it currently stands.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.