Reviewer's report

Title: Can a theory-based educational intervention change nurses' knowledge and attitudes concerning cancer pain management? A quasi-experimental design

Version: 1 Date: 24 March 2013

Reviewer: Claire A Hale

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essential revisions

1. the authors need to say if the participants in the control group got any kind of intervention (which is not unusual in trials) or if they got absolutely nothing other than the questionnaires to complete.

2. this intervention is billed as a 'theory based' intervention - yet the intervention involves a change in the ward routine to include the introduction of VAS for daily pain assessment. To me this latter sounds like a practical intervention and not a theory based intervention. I think that the authors need to clarify what they mean by a 'theory based intervention' in a way that includes the introduction of the VAS pain assessment tool,

Given the high drop out rate, which the authors acknowledge and which particularly meant that analysis at T3 could not be carried out, I think that the authors could be accused of overemphasizing the significance of their findings. The high drop out rate means that at T2 the study is seriously underpowered (the power analysis advised 12 in each group)

and therefore the significant p-values should be treated with a bit more caution - and this should be reflected in the abstract of the paper.

In Table 3 the statistical test used to assess level of significance should be inserted at the foot of the table

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.