Reviewer’s report

Title: The influence of organizational context on the use of research by nurses in Canadian pediatric hospitals

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Reviewer: Marek Brabec

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Paper:
The influence of organizational context on the use of research by nurses in Canadian pediatric hospitals

Authors:
Janet E Squires, Carole A Estabrooks, Shannon D Scott, Greta G Cummings, Leslie Hayduk, Sung Hyun Kang, Bonnie Stevens

Author of the comments about statistical aspects of the paper:
Ing. Marek Brabec, PhD

This is a paper on interesting and inherently difficult theme.

From technical point of view, it should be improved a little bit. Here is a list of areas that should be clarified/made more detailed/improved.

What about missings – namely, did it happen that a contacted respondent refused to answer (either completely or partially, for some of the questions)? If this could really happen, how the missing data were treated?

The text says in the Methods section “…and unit managers that met the study inclusion criteria [28] and who could be contacted were invited to complete the TROPIC staff survey on two occasions …”. Does it mean that some of the potential respondents could not be contacted? If so, what was the proportion of the uncontactable individuals/institutions? Also, can you argue that the uncontactables do not hold views that are systematically different from contactables (e.g., could you exclude that the uncontactables tend to be more frustrated, more burn-out, from smaller and/or worse equipped institutions, etc.)? In the presence of systematic differences between contactables and uncontactables, the representativeness of the sample data analyzed in the study would be seriously in jeopardy. The authors should provide argument about whether this can or cannot be a problem.

The term “independent variables” should be replaced (at all places where it occurs) by the term “explanatory variables”.

The exchangeable and independent working correlation structures are in a sense on the opposite sides of spectra, so that the authors might perhaps acknowledge
that the use of both (followed by the examinations of the differences in the results) amounts to a kind of simple sensitivity analysis with respect to the correlation structure. By the way, it is not entirely clear what working correlation structure is used for particular results (e.g. in Table 3).

One of the explanatory variables is “research use in the past” – it should be defined (and explained in the text of this paper) precisely of how distant past is meant (in the horizon of days/months/years etc.).

Some thought should be given by a possibility that the proportion of the intra-group variability changes with some explanatory variables. This is something that the current GEE model does not allow (it allows to change means, not covariance structure with explanatory variables). One possibility would be to try a mixed effect model with heteroscedasticity.

Statements like “The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposes that …” should be always accompanied by citation.