Reviewer’s report

Title: Bridging the gap between science and community in Fukushima City: A qualitative analysis of public health nurses’ written records

Version: Date: 23 October 2013

Reviewer: Milena Pavlova

Reviewer’s report:

General comments:

This manuscript explores the communications capacity and skills of public health nurses in Japan related to the health consequences of a disaster. The topic is relevant and of interest for the international research audience. The manuscript is clearly written. Also, it presents an interesting research approach for the analysis of qualitative data. The authors adhere to the relevant standards for reporting qualitative data analysis but important details on data collection are missing. Also, the manuscript can benefit from a conceptual model to frame the data analysis, as well as the discussion. The benefit of using multiple sources of information should be emphasized in the manuscript and further exploit. Below my specific suggestions on how to improve the manuscript.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The question posed by the authors is well defined and is presented in both abstract and introduction. However, the manuscript title does not match well this question, as well as the data presented in the manuscript. I suggest the following title: Bridging the gap between science and community in Fukushima City: A qualitative analysis of mothers’ and public health nurses’ written records. A revision of the first part of the title (which is now too general) should be also considered, since the study is specifically focused on communication problems.

2. At the end of the introduction, 1-2 sentences on the overall research approach/paradigm applied to answer the research question, should be added. Also, it is necessary to state clearly that the study uses three sources of qualitative data: mother’s records, nurses’ records and workshops. This remains somehow unclear in the introduction. Authors should also explain why they used three sources of data. What was the benefit of this data triangulation? No doubt that triangulation has important advantages for a qualitative study.

3. In the methods section, it is necessary to explain the sampling technique related to each of the three data sources. A justification for these sampling techniques should be also provided. Even though the study is qualitative, sampling techniques play an important role.

4. In the methods section, it is necessary to specify whether the analytical
method described, is applied to all three data sources. This is now unclear. If different analytical methods, then authors should explain all methods per source of data.

5. At the end of the methods section, an explanation should be provided on how the results of the three data sources are compared and/or put together in the results section. This can be facilitated by a conceptual model. If such model exists, authors can simply refer to it at the end of the methods section as a framework of their analysis. If no appropriate model, then authors should construct such model based on existing theories, and present the model in a background section preceding the methods section.

6. To improve the clarity of results presentation, the results section should be divided into sub-sections in accordance with the conceptual model, as suggested above.

7. The use of quotations form the data collected, is very informative and well done. However, this should not prevent the authors from making generalizations based on their data. In the current version, the amount of synthesis based on data and the amount of quotations is not well balanced.

8. The discussion sections should be also structured in accordance with the conceptual model of the study. This will help to outline to what extent results confirm theory and help to generate new theory.

9. In the discussion section, authors acknowledge well previous research. However, it is often unclear which statements are based on findings presented in the study and which statements are based on previous studies. This should be made clear in the discussion.

10. It is necessary to make a comparison between the results form the three sources of data. This can be done at the end of the results section, and/or throughout the discussion sections. The benefit of using three sources of data is somehow lost at the end of the manuscript. It should be also discussed in the sub-section on limitations.

11. The methodology advance mentioned in the limitation sub-section comes up somehow unexpected. This should be acknowledged at the end of the introduction, perhaps also in the method section to explain the choice of the analytical method, and then again in the discussion. What is the benefit of this analysis compared to others? This is now unclear in the manuscript.

12. In the conclusion section, prior to the recommendations, authors should provide conclusions based on their study results to make a link to the recommendations. This is necessary to demonstrate that recommendations follow form the results reported in the manuscript.

13. It will be useful to have an appendix containing the main/leading questions used in the qualitative data collection per source of data. Thus, for each data collection phase separately. This appendix should be introduced in the methods.
section and the choice of questions should be explained. It is expected that the questions are related to the conceptual model of the study.

14. I found the graphs very interesting. It could be informative to add graphs to compare the outcomes across the three sources of data.

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

**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