Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Local Interaction Strategies and Capacity for Better Care in Nursing Homes: A Multiple Case Study

**Version:** 2  
**Date:** 14 February 2014

**Reviewer:** Anna Rahman

**Reviewer’s report:**

The researchers conducted four extensive nursing home case studies and report and discuss their qualitative findings in this article, paying particular attention to the implications for management practices in nursing homes. The authors do a fine job of presenting what much qualitative research aims to do: They present thick descriptions of staff interactions in nursing homes. They also identify reasonable and actionable management strategies from their results. Some suggestions for strengthening the manuscript follow.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. The authors use throughout the manuscript a fairly large number of terms that refer to big concepts: relationship-oriented management, complex adaptive systems, local interaction strategies, cognitive diversity, complexity science, emergence. I was unfamiliar with some of these terms and would have appreciated more information about how other terms were being used in this manuscript. My recommendation: First, consider whether you really need all of these concepts in this paper. I believe the manuscript would be more readable if you dispensed with complexity science and emergence. I also think you would be better off with out referring to complex adaptive systems. To me, these terms made the paper sound like jargon instead straightforward English. Just focus on the big concepts closest to your work. Second, when you introduce big concept words and phrases, please clearly define them, but avoid defining them in terms of other big concepts. Your table on LIS does a nice job of describing what this term captures. Perhaps you could integrate some of the language from this table into your manuscript? Third, once you decide on how many big concepts you are going to introduce in this manuscript, please clarify, as you introduce each concept, how it relates to the other big concepts. For example, complexity science may be your biggest concept. Then comes complex adaptive systems, relationship-oriented management, LIS, cognitive diversity, and, finally, emergence. Something like this.

2. Speaking of LIS, I recommend that you introduce this term earlier, in the introduction and before the results section, because it seems to be an important concept in your paper.

3. Additionally, I was not clear why LIS was introduced first in your results section. Is it the overarching concept that encompasses both common and positive local interactions, which you report on subsequently? If so, I think you
need to help your readers understand the relationships among these three subsections.

Minor Essential Revisions
4. A small point: On page 19, you write: “LIS was not widespread or in regular use in many NHs.” Your findings cannot be generalized to make this statement. Unless you have another source you can cite here, you should re-write the sentence. As it is, I do not believe you have a basis for making such a sweeping generalization (even though I may suspect it is true).
5. Finally, please edit and proofread your manuscript carefully. I cannot readily pinpoint why (maybe it was the use of so many big concept phrases), but the text did not flow well in some sections. My recommendation: Read the final draft out loud and listen to how it sounds.

Discretionary Revisions
1. First, an overall comment: The interview excerpts in the results and discussion section are excellent and, I believe, capture what sound like real staff relationships in nursing homes, both positive and negative.
2. I will note, however, that the ADON’s comment on page 16 does not read to me as rosy as you interpret it. To me, she sounds as if she may have been annoyed with the CNA comment that she overhead. That’s just my opinion, however.

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests or conflicts of interest.