Reviewer’s report

Title: Relationship between interRAI HC and the ICF: Opportunity for operationalizing the ICF

Version: 1 Date: 9 July 2008

Reviewer: Julie Pryor

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

The comparison undertaken in this study is an interesting one. The title and the stated objective, ‘to examine the relationship between the ICF and the interRAI HC’, however, led me to expect to find out to what extent ICF is represented in interRAI HC and vice versa. Instead, the study was limited to exploring and reporting how interRAI HC items can be matched to various ICF codes. As such, I see this work more as an exploration of the pragmatic or operational relationship between interRAI and ICF than a ‘conceptual relationship’ as they suggest.

If the authors believe that ICF, ‘serves as a guide for comprehensive assessment’ and that interRAI HC is a comprehensive assessment tool then closer scrutiny of their relationship between the two is warranted. In particular, this should report to what extent are the 1,424 ICF items covered by the 173 interRAI HC items.

To address this concern and enhance the usefulness of this study, Table 1 could be expanded to include details of the actual number of ICF codes in each chapter and the percentage of codes in each chapter covered by interRAI HC. The simple addition of two extra columns to Table 1 and expansion of the results section to report this would be sufficient. This would enable the reader to see at glance one dimension of the ‘relationship between interRAI HC and ICF’.

The other dimension that would be of interest to report the aspects of interRAI that ICF does not cover.

Another unrelated issue is that I could not understand Table 3 - further clarification is needed.

Finally, several of the claims made by the authors in the conclusion do not seem justified. In its current form the article led me to conclude:

1. ‘Compatibility between the ICF and the interRAI HC’ was not met.
2. ‘Health professionals involved with interRAI can [not] be reassured that they cover substantial domains of the ICF’.
3. There may be some potential ‘for the systems to co-exist and complement each other’.
I look forward to reading an extended version of this paper.

Minor essential revisions:

This is generally well written and easy to follow. However, it does contain some minor errors and ambiguities that need to be corrected before publication. These are:

1. In the abstract, first sentence delete one set of the following words ‘the interRAI HC (Home Care) assessment’.
2. Throughout the manuscript reference to the components of ICF need to be changed from ‘the Environment’ to ‘Environmental Factors’.
3. ICF needs to be referenced, both in text and in the reference list.
4. The number of items in InterRAI HC needs to be added to the methods section.
5. In the discussion section, paragraph starting with ‘An advantage’ the bracket needs closing in the fifth sentence.
6. In the discussion section, paragraph starting with ‘Electronic health records’, ‘precise’ should read ‘precision’ and two sentences later ‘who’ needs to be added after ‘health professionals.

**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.