Reviewer's report

Title: Barriers to research utilization and research use among registered nurses in the care of older people: a cross-sectional survey

Version: 1 Date: 22 October 2007

Reviewer: Judith A Ritchie

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a report that links perceived barriers and perceived research use and therefore makes a useful contribution. While many 'barriers' studies have been done in nursing, there is only one previous publication making the link between perceived barriers and research use. The authors of this paper make that link but also discuss the relative non-specificity of the relevant barriers in the tool used in the study and the resulting difficulty in designing interventions.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Throughout the paper there are unexplained differences in the 'n'. While a total of 140 responded to the survey, some of the 'n's listed in Table 1 are as low as 50. The same type of discrepancy exists in the text. It is therefore difficult to determine what numbers are actually used in the calculations of the means and statistical analyses. It does not seem appropriate to test between group difference on items when the numbers vary so greatly.

2. The description on page 5 of the scoring for the Barriers Scale makes no reference to calculation of a percentage response. However, in the analysis section reference is made to analysis of proportions and in Table 1 percentages are reported for each item of the scale. It is not clear what these percentages mean.

3. The analysis does not include any correction for multiple comparisons and there are 34 comparisons presented in Table 1 alone.

4. Page 9 end of the first partial paragraph - reference is to Damanpour in relation to statement about working in specialist settings enhancing research use. However, Damanpour is about innovation and refers neither to research use or specialist that I can find. This link needs to be made more explicitly.

5. Page 10 line 4 - section beginning with 'To further explore...' to the end of the sentence (Table 1) - repeats earlier statements.

6. Page 10 11th line - sentence beginning 'Further more, the lack of consistent differences' is unclear. How does this inconsistency undermine the usefulness of
the scale?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. page 2 - last full sentence beginning 'Increased knowledge in geriatrics...' no reference is provided for this very certain statement.

2. Page 7 and elsewhere - Phrase "older nursing program" - not clear what this means. I suspect that it means non-university program or program prior to 1982. This should be clarified.

3. Reference 322 - analysis should be analysis

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. There are several wording issues that are a bit awkward:
   a. In abstract in second paragraph of results section: I believe the statement should be that there is a 'weak but significant association'
   b. The word barrier is often presented as a singular nouns when it should be plural (barriers) eg page 3 line 3,
   c. page 3 under perceptions of barriers to change and research utilization, first paragraph, second last line - delete 'still'
   d. page 7 Under Barriers to research utilization and reported research use, first line - currently states "The scoring of the RU index was 2.95 ...". Might be good to change to "The mean score for the RU index was ..."
   e. Page 8 under RN's perceptions
      - RN's should be RNs'
      -- line 8 in first paragraph, sentence beginning "One reason ...", 'are' should be 'is'
   f page 9 - first full paragraph - last full line - 'the' should be deleted (currently says 'their the'
   g. page 11 - under Methodological consideration
      --- consideration in title should be considerations
      --- in first sentence, might say "All RNs in participating municipalities were invited to participate"
      -- The second sentence should read " the study was performed 'in' (not 'at') eight municipalities 'of' (not 'in') varying sizes."

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have
responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.