Reviewer's report

Title: Interventions aimed at improving the nursing work environment: a systematic review

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Reviewer: Melanie Lavoie-Tremblay

Reviewer's report:

General comments
Interesting and Relevant manuscript. The major compulsory revision is about the definition of the question. Other minor essential revisions are suggested.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

Major Compulsory Revisions

The question posed in this study is relevant and new. However, the question is not well defined (confusing for the reader). The objective is different of the aim, and research questions and aims are the same. It will be important to use the same wording. There is another question included in the theoretical background.

In the abstract, the objective is to identify characteristics of NWEs and then assess the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving the NWE.

In the Background, the aim is to systematically review the scientific literature on implemented interventions aimed at improving the NWE and their effectiveness. There are 2 questions: 1) In which areas of the nursing WE have interventions been implemented and in which areas are interventions lacking 2) How effective are these interventions at improving NWE.

In the results, the term type of interventions is to answer first question that is about areas, type of intervention and areas of NWE is not the same.

In the Discussion, this section discusses about two aims (vs research questions) and used term where instead of areas…

The first aim of this review was to explore where NWE intervention have been implemented...

In addition there is another question/objective included in the manuscript in the section Theoretical Background: What constitutes a NWE and its characteristics. This section includes some details about background, methods and results.

Should used this section (theoretical background) to provide more information of the body of knowledge related to implementation of interventions in health care and other sectors…. (e.g.meta-analysis Van der Klink et al.; 2001)

Is there too much material (too much questions) for one manuscript? How the aim is fitting with both questions and how questions are related together? i.e. In
which areas of the nursing WE have interventions been implemented and in which areas are interventions lacking.

Why it is relevant to identify in which areas are interventions lacking. How it is related to the aim to identify implemented interventions aimed at improving the NWE and their effectiveness. If these areas were those identify in the literature to be sensitive characteristics to improve the effectiveness of NWE, then it will be interesting to know that there are few interventions and there is a need to improve this body of knowledge. However we don’t have this information.

Minor Essential Revisions

In background p. 4
Moreover, we could not find any reviews of which quality work environment strategies have been implemented and evaluated.
Suggest specifying in health care sector.
The term strategies and interventions are both used, are they synonyms.
The first part of the manuscript the term “we” is used and in the second part the term “the authors” is used, should be coherent and might not used “we” in a manuscript.

Theoretical Background
Yet, none of these frameworks comprehensively reported all quality nursing work environment characteristics ...but you don’t know yet what are those characteristics, maybe to word frameworks reported different characteristics?

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Minor Essential Revisions
As mentioned there is some description of method used to answer: What constitutes a NWE and its characteristics in the theoretical background but not in details since it is not the focus of the manuscript. For the two questions, the methods are appropriate and well described.

p.9 Screening
Then the studies were fully read....and pre and post observation. Do you mean pre post measure?
Be careful sometimes using 1 study and one study, same wording

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes.
Minor Essential Revisions

Should revise the title Type of interventions. Be careful to insert a new << word>> in the middle of a manuscript. NWE characteristics vs areas of NWE vs type of interventions. Characteristics and type are not synonyms.

Three NWE characteristics in our taxonomy were not explored in the studies in this review. This sentence address the second question in question 2: In which areas of the nursing WE have interventions been implemented and in which areas are interventions lacking. There is a different between: not explored and lacking.

Again I will be careful to present this section, which areas are interventions lacking. Taxonomy of characteristics....The characteristics found are those more cited in the literature to describe which areas of the NWE that interventions were targeted. If some of the characteristics were not address by the intervention in the syst review it doesn’t mean that there is a lack of interventions in these areas.

Effectiveness of interventions. Italics is sometimes used (or not) for characteristics and interventions (confusing).

Suggest providing more information about the intervention e.g. primary nursing (provide a definition, context...).

p.14

...showed a significant increase in workload and innovation in the workplace (both decrease), this is confusing with increase and decrease in the same sentence.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Minor Essential Revisions

p.15-16 Type of interventions

The first aim of this review was to explore where NWE intervention have been implemented… again reword type and where

It will be interesting to report on the implementation process of the interventions (e.g. using participatory approach) knowing that the success/effectiveness of an intervention depend as well on the implementation process (e.g. Parkes and Sparkes ;1998 Kompier et Cooper; 1999).

Limitations

The relatively small numbers of articles provide limited evidence to answer question 2.

Only focus on nurses, there are great studies (e.g. Bourbonnais R et al 2006) including all health care workers in health care showed effective interventions to improve WE and health.

Conclusions
Furthermore, the interventions of primary nursing, educational toolbox and individualized care and clinical supervision all showed some effect in improving the NWE.

The conclusions should be more precise or reword, e.g., this affirmation is based only on one study for primary nursing in a specific context (nursing home) in 2004.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Minor Essential Revisions

Title the term used is NWE, in the manuscript the term used is quality work environment and NWE, suggest using the same wording or explain why using quality.

Abstract: Clarify objective see comments 1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

Not use we.

Results: The most effective interventions at improving the NWE were primary nursing, the educational toolbox, and the individualized care and clinical supervision.

Be careful how to write this with the limitation of the study e.g. The most effective interventions at improving the NWE were primary nursing (one study)....

7. Is the writing acceptable?

Minor Essential Revisions

Yes review for consistence of some key words (e.g. areas, vs type vs where)

**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