Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring the context of care in an Australian acute care hospital: a nurse survey

Version: 1 Date: 16 February 2010

Reviewer: Maud Heinen

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   The aim of the paper is relevant and well defined. The aims in the abstract however differ from the aims in the paper.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   The methods used for measuring the context of the included wards seem correct and appropriate. However control wards and intervention wards were used and no pre post test measurements were conducted at the intervention wards. It was stated that ‘Logistical constraints prevented measurements before the implementation, therefore it was assumed that context in control and implementation wards was similar prior to the implementation.’
   Differences between wards were found but there were no differences between intervention and control wards. Because of the design no conclusions can be drawn about the impact of the intervention on aspects of context. Which was not an aim of the initial study.
   The methods used for selecting the tool are not very thorough as also affirmed in the discussion of the paper. In my opinion the selection of the assessment tool and the effect of the intervention on context are not the main aims of the study and should therefore not be reported as such.
   The judgment of a statistician is needed to evaluate the statistical part of the paper. Canonical analysis are rarely used. The description in the paper on canonical correlation analysis is helping.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   A statisticians judgment is needed.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   The manuscript adheres to relevant standards.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   The discussion section is much too long and needs to be much more focused on the aim of the paper and the relevance of the results of the main aim of this
The paper lacks a clear focus. For example, the part on the not-selected tool can be left out or described very shortly in one sentence. The conclusion on aiming interventions on ward leadership instead of the individual nurse is relevant but repeated too often in various parts of the paper. The part in the discussion ‘Despite these questions …. Implemented.’ Can be left out at this point because it does not add anything and is not following logically from the previous text. The second point made in the ‘Variation in context between and within wards’ part is lacking a clear message. The part on Context in Australian acute care nursing is not adding relevant information in describing the relevance of the results of this study.

Advantages of using the method of canonical correlation analysis are described but disadvantages like the loss of detailed information is left out. Disadvantages of the technique used should be mentioned also. The third conclusion ‘Given that.. organization?’ is not very clear formulated. What is meant here?

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The abstract accurately conveys what has been found, except for the fact that what is described as the first aim is differing from the first aim as described in the paper.

7. Is the writing acceptable?
The writing is acceptable, but as for readability there is a lot to gain by for example writing shorter sentences. Also reformulating sentences “-with explanations within the sentence-“ would enhance readability a lot.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.