Reviewer’s report

Title: Effectiveness of spiritual care training to enhance spiritual health and spiritual care competency among oncology nurses

Version: 0 Date: 08 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Paul Galchutt

Reviewer's report:

This paper contains new findings for the field produced by methods and state of the science. Below are notes on some matters to be addressed.

Summary: The overall findings of this project are encouraging and contribute to the field regarding educating nurses concerning spiritual health and spiritual care competencies.

Study Design and Analysis: Under section 2.2.2, there a few matters to be addressed. First, in the sentence referencing Yao Jianan et al, I would recommend removing the end of the sentence, "…and so on." Second, adding some detail about the duration to importantly determine the dose of the "spiritual care training classes," "case sharing sessions," and "the personal growth book discussion." Also, were these trainings incorporated into the workday somehow? Were these additional sessions beyond the workday? Knowing more detail would help with feasibility and acceptability exploration. Third, when writing about the "experimental group protocol," it is cited that "in-depth interviews" occurred and that from these interviews data is offered about the perceptions of the nurses. Yet, there is no evidence of qualitative data analysis. This is problematic for this manuscript as nowhere is it mentioned that this study endeavors into a mixed method methodology design with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. If this was a part of the ethical research protocol, it needs to be included in all aspects of this manuscript. Fourth, quotes are offered within this 2.2.2 section absent of any citations. Please insert them. Within the Results section, there appears to be some misspellings of "demention" (dimension), "spirial" (spiritual), and "controled" (controlled). There also appears to be an important typo regarding statistical significance within the last sentence of the Results section, perhaps P&lt;0.05?

Tables/Figures: With Table 1, please note somehow, I presume, that all nurse participants are female. This would, ideally, be noted here with your tables helping communicate your research "story." This, of course, reflects external validity and your ability to generalize these findings beyond regions and cultures who evidence male/men within their nursing workforce. Also, within Table 1, it would be helpful to have additional information regarding the category, "Religion." It is unclear what the binary "yes/no" category means. I do not remember this being mentioned in the text of the manuscript. Because of the experimental nature of this study, it would have been helpful to have a table illustrating both the experimental and control groups along with their pre-/post- scores in one table, even if this means creating the table in a landscape orientation. I sense it helps enhance the impact of your findings.
Introduction/Discussion: Within the introduction, "spiritual well-being" is listed parenthetically immediately following "spiritual health." If you are equating these two terms, I recommend a sentence of explanation regarding why you sense the construct of spiritual well-being is the same as spiritual health. Also, within the introduction, the verb "overcome" is used in reference to limitations and adversity. Navigating this word (overcome) within some contexts communicates that the limitations or adverse circumstances have been eliminated or annihilated by virtue of personal agency or action. Unless this word is part of a copyrighted definition, I would commend the consideration of alternative verbs such as adjust or adapt as in "...ability to adapt to adversity." In the second paragraph, when addressing the purpose of spiritual care, I would recommend a connecting word such as "additionally" to your second sentence regarding the purpose as the first sentence begs for a citation. Within the second sentence concerning the purpose of spiritual care, the word "alleviate" is used. Like "overcome," the word, "alleviate," communicates that an emotional challenge can be completely and consistently resolved with spiritual care. Perhaps less polarized terms such as "mitigate," or "address" could be used.

I would accept this paper with the recommended changes and revisions and with making this into a mixed method study.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
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I recommend additional statistical review

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