Reviewer’s report

Title: The important factors in clinical competency of Iranian nurses: A Qualitative Study

Version: 4  
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Reviewer: Lars Sandman

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. Generally the english needs improvement.
2. Adapt the title to better reflect the content of the article – i.e. its focus on professional ethics.
3. Generally in the Background section – a better definition of professional nursing ethics is needed to enable a more clear relationship between the themes in the result section and different aspects of professional ethics.
4. Line 6 – even if ethics is the foundation of nursing practice – it does not necessarily follow that ethics require more attention than other aspects of nursing care – i.e. if ethics is the foundation – it is also the foundation for all different aspects of nursing care – and how one’s attention should be prioritised is an ethical question but that does not necessarily mean that ethics in itself should always be the centre of attention.
5. Line 8 – human rights are not necessarily cultural rights (in the sense that they are culturally dependent) – some would argue that human rights (if there is such a thing) are universal.
6. Line 8 – what is it to respect behaviour? What behaviour? Is that another way to say that we should respect autonomy?
7. Line 13 – nursing ethics does obviously contain (or should contain) critical thinking and logical reasoning – but it needs also contain a proper set of values to be the basis of such reasoning and thinking.
8. Line 18 – to take responsibility for the patients values might come in conflict with respecting human rights etc – se earlier in the text – i.e. the authors need to reflect over which views on nursing ethics they want to adhere to since they are not all compatible with each other.
9. Line 23 – do not understand the meaning of the sentence.
11. Line 43 – is the aim to describe factors that affect professional ethics or how they deal with these factors – unclear! – also unclear whether it is about the exercise or development of professional ethics.
13. Result section – broad and heterogenous themes – where the connection to professional ethics is not always clear (since professional ethics have not been properly defined in the background section) - also since the result seems to bring together both what causes ethical problems with what is factors affecting good professional ethics and what could support good professional ethics – the aim and result of the study becomes complex and difficult to understand – the authors need to clarify the aim and adapt the result accordingly.

14. Line 96 and the first theme: no example of self-control given in the text – level of responsibility is not all about character but also about to what extent the organization makes the professional accountable, hence the theme label does not fully seem to reflect the content.

15. Line 115 – example of good communication – should fit under theme 3?

16. Line 120 – Standards of quality is a label that does not really seem to reflect the content of the theme – which is more about organizational preconditions – i.e. it seems strange to call shortage of staff a standard of quality.

17. Line 129 – example does not fully clarify in what sense the nurses have breached their responsibility etc.

18. The discussion section suffers from the same problems as the aim – i.e. is it about the factors affecting the exercise of professional ethics – or the development of professional ethics. This needs to be clarified and the article aligned to this clarification.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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.