Reviewer’s report

Title: "We are the best to stand in for Patients": A qualitative study on nurses' advocacy characteristics in Ghana

Version: 0 Date: 05 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Kathryn Pfaff

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting manuscript.

General Comments:

It is generally well-written but there are minor grammar and punctuation errors that require correction. Some citations are lacking where needed. I suggest a good peer editor.

The need for examining this phenomenon is not clearly argued. Why is it important that patient advocacy be understood in Ghana? The introduction and discussion should position this study within the context of the international literature.

There is overlap between some of the themes and the exemplar quotes. In some situations the quotes could fit in more than one category. In some situations, the quotes don't seem to clearly fit with the theme. I think it may help to define each concept from the conceptual model clearly in the You indicate using an audit trail. How did you make decisions about allocating the data to the specific themes?

Specific Comments:

1. The introduction needs some re-working. As written, it is a list of examples of nurse advocacy and lacks a clear focus/organization. What is the state of the literature with regard to your specific question? Please also emphasize why advocacy is important in nursing - for example, patient outcomes, nurse retention, advancing the nursing profession etc.

2. I am interested to learn more about the conceptual model mentioned in the background. Please describe it in more detail. How was it developed and how has it been applied? A diagram would also enhance reader understanding of the model. You indicate that it was used to guide the data analysis. Did you search for other states/trait traits aside from those concepts that make up the model? This may have biased your thinking and it then limits the
trustworthiness of your findings. A clear description of the model, its concepts, and definitions would help the reader better interpret the findings - see comments below.

Design:

1. A citation is needed immediately after reporting the design used.
2. Why were both midwives and nurses interviewed? Their scopes of practice differ.
3. p. 7 line 58 - Recruitment occurs before consent. Please revise. Please also describe how recruitment occurred.
4. Were interviews conducted at the hospital? If so, how did you protect participant privacy and confidentiality?

Data Analysis:

1. Please include a citation for the "principles of thematic analysis" used on p. 8 line 27
2. Describe the process for coding and reduction of data in greater detail.
3. You refer to member checking - please describe the process and outcomes - were any changes made?

Results:

1. Report percentages along with frequencies.
2. The nurse traits as reported seem generalized and not surprising. Can you extrapolate any new findings or data that is specific to your population in Ghana?
3. p. 11 line 11 - It is unclear how facilitating patient care and acting quickly is empathy. This is prioritization and the duty of a nurse. Please explain.
4. Re theme of nurturing, some exemplar quotes are unclear, as is the conceptual definition. How is helping with transportation nurturing? I am wondering if you need further explanation or sub-themes - nurturing through presence and nurturing through education or teaching.
5. Again, I see overlap in how the data could be categorized between and among the themes of "ethical", "assertive", and "persistent". I think you need to define these clearly and re-examine where the quotes are organized.

Discussion - Please place the findings within the context of the international literature. What gap was uncovered? What does this paper add? Please include limitations.

Conclusion - The conclusion requires significant strengthening.

**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.

Yes

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

No

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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