Reviewer’s report

Title: Implementation and feasibility of the Stroke Nursing Guideline in the care of patients with stroke: a mixed methods study

Version: 0 Date: 29 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Lisa Kidd

Reviewer's report:

Many thanks for submitting this manuscript. IT was an interesting read and I think it could make an important contribution to the evidence base. I have made some detailed minor comments here for the authors to consider. My main point that the authors need to address is the approach to the methodology. As a mixed method study, this needs to be framed in this way and a description of this added into the methodology/methods section. The other point which relates to that is that the authors frequently comment on the richness afforded by both the quantitative and qualitative data yet the paper appears to rely on reporting the quantitative data mostly. There are comments about how the qualitative data supports or adds more detail to the findings yet there are no examples that appear to have been given from the qualitative focus group data. I'd be expecting to see some of these examples in there in the typical style of reporting qualitative data (e.g. quotes and identification symbols) given the mixed method approach. Without this, it is difficult to determine whether the conclusions in the paper are supported by the study findings.

Page 4, line 83 - change in the long-run to 'in the long-term…'

Page 5/6, lines 109-129 - these paragraphs seem a little out of context here - the introduction moves from considering the issues that stroke survivors experience post stroke to the importance of the nursing role in rehab and then back to the issues stroke survivors face - can these sections be subsumed within the earlier part of the introduction to set the scene for the issues that strokes survivors face post stroke?

Page 7 - I think the argument for why nurses specifically don't use interdisciplinary guidelines (and hence the rationale for the need to develop a nursing specific one) needs to be made more explicit here.

Page 8, lines 159-162 sound clumsy and need rewording.

Page 8, line 174 - should read ‘what are’ rather than what is

Page 8 - With the way the questions are currently worded, I would question what the difference is between 'using' and 'implementing' - I think the authors should consider rewording the
questions e.g b) 'what are nurses' and auxiliary nurses' views on the acceptability of using the SNG in supporting the provision of daily nursing care and c) what are nurses' and auxiliary nurses' views on barriers and facilitators to implementing and embedding the SNG within routine daily nursing care?

Methodology - I would have expected to see something about the mixed methods methodology and at what point the two data sets were integrated and why. Could a paragraph be added to explain this.

Page 9, line 184 and 185 - it wasn't clear what "patients' items on screening and application of key interventions in stroke care" comprised in terms of data collected or measurement tool used - could be made more explicit here the nature of the data that was gathered from patients' notes - or add a signpost to where in the text this is described as I note the authors describe this in more detail later on.

Page 9, lines 188-189 it is stated that the 'SNG was implemented applying recommended implementation strategies [44, 45]' - could a few examples of what these implementation strategies were be added here?. Or signpost to later in the text where they are described in more detail.

Page 10, line 198 - "conducted at a neurology and rehabilitation wards" - remove 'a'

Page 10, line 215 - "Also, it was based on the CNRS-Guideline [29]." - could something be added here to state what this guideline is and who it's aimed at to give it a bit of context

Page 10 - "group of 20 interdisciplinary professional experts critically reviewed the content, readability, layout and usability of the guideline." Given that the guideline was specifically developed for nurses, I'm surprised that it was reviewed by an interdisciplinary team - were there any differences between the professionals as to what they thought about the guideline and its content?

Page 13 (and figures) - I think referring to the group of nurses on which pre-test measures were conducted is confusing as they are not a control group that are separate from the ones who undertook the intervention (i.e. the implementation of the SNG). Could they be labelled differently to avoid confusion? E.g. just pre and post test/before and after intervention?

Page 13, lines 272-275 - can the authors please describe more explicitly what was asked in the QIT statements and the purpose of the tool was and how this aligned with or informed the focus groups? Was the intention of this tool to gather preliminary data that could be used as prompts in the focus groups? When was the QIT used…immediately post intervention or during the
intervention? Given that the QIT was developed for the study, can the authors provide some description of how it was tested prior to use?

Page 15, line 327 - should read 'studied repeatedly'

Page 18, line 378 - "The nursing staff view of the general usefulness of the SNG scored a mean of 7.7." - can a few words be added to highlight the meaning of this score..e.g. was it good or poor?

Page 17 - in relation to the sections which described the nurses views on the usefulness and the implementation of the SNG - I would have expected this section to be supported with evidence from the qualitative data. At the moment the data reported is from the quantitative tool only with no data evidenced from the qualitative component. Some example quotations to illustrate these findings are needed.

Were there any differences in the perceptions of nurses who worked on different wards? Was there anything about the context of working in a rehab versus neurology ward for example that might have influenced how the SNG was used or implemented? OR for example, any differences between nurses who had been qualified for longer?

Discussion - reference is made to how the qualitative data supports the findings however there is no evidence of the qualitative data being reported on in a typical qualitative manner in the results section so this needs addressed.

Page 20, line 424 - "The nursing staff judged the implementation to be successful" - in what way? Can you provide some examples as to why they thought it was successful here?

Page 20, line 428-9 "At the time of the implementation of the guideline, severe organizational and budgetary restrictions were taking place." - can you describe these in more detail please and consider how they might have influenced the process of the study itself but also the findings and their interpretation?

Page 21, lines 462-3: "Application of the SNG recommendations was quite satisfactory as three out of four items were used." - which items were these - I think throughout the text the authors refer to 'items or statements' with little context or description given as to what these are.

Page 21, lines 462-471 - the authors needs to be more explicit in this section that the SNG didn't improve screening or management of depression (if I've picked up the results correctly) - can the authors please comment on this and offer an interpretation for why this might have been the case or if the SNG needs some element of revision based on this?

Page 23, line 510-12 "The mixed method design provided rich data. The findings of the qualitative part were illustrative of the findings of the quantitative findings of the study to which
they provided more depth..." - this might be so but the qualitative evidence hasn't been sufficiently included to be able to confirm this as a reader.

Page 23, line 513 "and a robust design is needed." - would suggest removing this as it implies that your study was not robust.

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal