Author’s response to reviews

Title: Nurses' competencies in Home healthcare: an interview study

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Address

Att: Editor Panayota Sourtzi 16 October 2017

Please find enclosed a Revision Note to the reviewers’ comments on the manuscript NURS-D-17-00108 entitled: “Nurses' competencies in Home healthcare: an interview study”.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to resubmit this manuscript. We have read the valuable comments made by the reviewers with great interest and hence revised our manuscript regarding most items. Major changes in the revised manuscript are marked in red.

Graham Williamson (Reviewer 1)

We find your comments very valuable and we have therefore made revision throughout the manuscript. Thank you!
Panayota Sourtzi (Reviewer 2)

We are very grateful that you have drawn our attention to inconsistencies and ambiguities in the manuscript. Thank you!

Detailed response

Reviewer 1:

Introduction.

You say: 'Thus, there are no formal national requirements regarding competencies for all nurses in HHC.' Give an international perspective: that maybe the case in your country. Is it the same elsewhere?

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed and hopefully clarifies the international perspectives.

State the overall aims and objectives and give a research question. You currently have these in the data collection section and they need to be earlier.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.

In the introduction outline the key differences between roles, responsibilities and training of RNs compared to ANs.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed and hopefully clarifies the differences between RNs and ANs.

Methods.

Show your schedule of questioning as an appendix and refer to that in the data collection section.
Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed and hopefully clarifies the interview questions in the data collection better.

Discussion.

You say 'The nurses interviewed followed the laws and guidelines and gave good care'. You can't conclude this as you have not set out to assess it and have no objective evidence so be more circumspect…these nurses believed that they gave good care.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.

You talk about knowledge transfer and reflection. This does not feature in the findings from the interviews: did participants specifically say this? There is only one quote talking about reflection so at best you can say only one person valued reflection. If it was a more widespread thought include more evidence in the findings section.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.

Limitations? You need to include sections on Reflexivity in your research? What was your relationship to participants and how did you overcome any potential biases?

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed and hopefully clarifies our relationship to participants and how we did overcome potential biases.

What were the similarities and differences (if any) between RNs and ANs?

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment. The aim was to explore nurses’ competencies in HHC. We used a qualitative content analysis to describe variations by identifying similarities and differences in the textual content as whole rather than specifically examining groups (i.e. RNs and ANs).
Therefore we do not say anything about the similarities and differences between RNs and ANs. They are irrelevant in this context.

According to the National Board of Health [4]…is this Sweden's national board?

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.

This section is all a bit polemical and does not flow from your study so delete Managers who do not meet nurses' need for individual competency recognition and competence development as well as the need for team reflection will be risking the collapse of HHC. Nurses will become more and more inclined to change employers if their individual needs are not met. The risk is then that HHC will fail and have difficulty in attracting new nurses. Managers must contribute to competence development to a greater extent than previously. Managers who support organizational conditions that provide more opportunities for nurses' competence development programs will be making an investment in the future [51].

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.

You can't conclude this based on one participant: 'Our results suggest that reflection may be a useful tool for the development of HHC and the transfer of competencies between nurses'.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.

This article suffers from conflating one or two interviews into some assertions that are assumed to be universal truths. The authors are keen to say they do not generalise but the tone of the discussion section and the conclusions is very much saying that what they have found applies elsewhere. This is quite the wrong tone for such a small qualitative study and the authors need to be much more tentative in their conclusions and recommendations.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed.
Reviewer 2:

Introduction.

In the introduction it would be useful to include some information for HHC organisation in Sweden and also explain the differences between RNs and ANs competences required within HHC.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed and hopefully clarifies the HHC organization in Sweden and differences between RNs’ and ANs’ competences in HHC.

Methods.

In the method section the authors write that the participants - in data collection - gave oral consent, but later in Ethics state that consent was written. Please explain.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed and hopefully clarifies the ethical aspects better.

Result.

There are some concerns regarding presentation of results. The authors state that they have included quotes supporting their content analysis, however, the quotes included are too few for the reader to assess the relevance of categories and their interpretation. It would also be useful for the reader to know if there were significant differences between RNs and ANs in each category.

Author’s response

Thank you for the comment; the text has been changed. We have added more quotes, which hopefully help the reader to access more easily the relevance of categories and their interpretation. The aim was to explore nurses’ competencies in HHC. We used a qualitative content analysis to describe variations by identifying similarities and differences in the textual content as whole rather than specifically examining groups (i.e. RNs and ANs). Therefore we do
not say anything about the similarities and differences between RNs and ANs. They are irrelevant in this context.