Reviewer's report

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

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Graham Williamson

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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?

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.

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

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

Discussion section:

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.

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.

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?

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

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

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].

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'.

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.

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

Yes

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.

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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