Reviewer's report

Title: A study of macro-, meso- and micro-barriers and enablers affecting extended scopes of practice: the case of rural nurse practitioners in Australia

Version: 1 Date: 04 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Martha MacLeod

Reviewer's report:

Most of the concerns expressed in the first review have been satisfactorily addressed. There are a few points for consideration that the revisions have prompted, and one potentially very serious one (see P.6 Recruitment and data collection).

Page 3-4. In the last sentence on page 3, "However the capacity of NPs to provide definitive care across the continuity of care….." Should it read, "continuum of care.." At the end of that para, on page 4, it notes that "Use of the these publicly funded, Australian Government….. not to those working in public hospitals." This point raises the question about whether NPs working in publicly funded primary care settings and other non-hospital settings (which are prevalent in remote settings) have access to MBS and PBS. This needs to be clarified.

Page 5. It is positive that the study aims have been reviewed. The current phrasing is inconsistent with the revisions made later in the paper. I would like to suggest that the phrasing be changed from, "Using the NP model as an example or case study,...." to "Using the NP role as an example...." Later in the paper the NP role is discussed, and the word 'case' is used to depict the unit of analysis as individual NPs.

Page 6. The study design is clarified, but there are some confusing elements. In the last sentence in para 1 under Study Design, "...affect the efficiency and effectiveness of extended scope of practice roles....". The use of the terms 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' suggests that the study will address these two concepts. It does not. Could the word 'implementation' be used here?

Page 6. Recruitment and data collection. The revised statement, "Recruitment targeted rural and remote registered nurses working in extended scope of practice roles...." It is not clear who these nurses are - what are their designations and whether they would be named NPs as they would be
registered as 'endorsed NPs'. This is a major concern. Would some of the nurses be Remote Area Nurses?

When I go to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Registration Standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner, it states, "Advanced practice nursing as a nurse practitioner is a qualitatively different level of advanced nursing practice to that of the registered nurse due to the additional legislative functions and the regulatory requirements. The requirements include a prescribed educational level, a specified advanced nursing practice experience, and continuing professional development." The extended scope of practice for Registered Nurses is endorsement, specifically, "Supply scheduled medicines" in Rural and isolated practice" (see glossary - Endorsement”). Nurses are fulfilling the NP role as an endorsed NP, or they are RNs.

The integrity of this manuscript depends on the accurate description of the informants. Are the informants actually endorsed NPs or those who work with endorsed NPs? Or are they RNs working as RNs but perhaps extending their endorsed scope due to being a remote area nurse? This needs to be clarified. If any of the informants are not endorsed NPs - or their named colleagues, then the findings, discussion and implications need to be altered accordingly. That is, the implementation of a new role, NP, is quite different than an existing role adding a new endorsed set of skills/competencies (e.g. remote area nurse). If this is not about NPs specifically, but rather all RNs with extended scopes, then a major reconceptualization is needed.

Page 21-22: Discussion A positive part of this new portion concerns how this study might inform the examination of the implementation of other professions with extended scopes. It would be helpful however, to have this section clearly organized re micro, meso and macro implications - And what you've identified as the most important to focus on, given the findings of this study. It is important too that the differentiation between an existing profession adding some new competencies, or the creation of a newly endorsed role is made here.

Page 22: Re the Strengths and Weaknesses: It is suggested that this is a 'rare' lens. Given that the micro-meso-macro lens is used in other major policy documents re scopes of practice, to call it rare, is overreaching. I agree that the micro-meso-macro lens is a useful lens to examine implementation of new roles in the health system. As this is about NPs, which is a new endorsed role, not just extending an existing role's scope of practice, the limitations need to speak about the usefulness of this micro-meso-macro analysis for use with existing professions maintaining
their roles but extending their scopes (e.g. the endorsed scope for Remote Area Nurses). These are two different things, with different organizational, legislative, and practice implications.

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.

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:

Acceptable

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