Reviewer's report

Title: Patient satisfaction with nursing care in Ethiopia: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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Reviewer: Souraya Sidani

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Overall, the research topic is of interest / relevance to nurse researchers and managers, worldwide. Determining aspects of care with which hospitalized patients are satisfied and factors that contribute to satisfaction is informative and has the potential for guiding quality improvement initiatives. The focus on satisfaction with nursing care in particular countries such as Ethiopia is meaningful, providing data for cross-country comparison and identification of contextual factors that may influence implementation and satisfaction with nursing care.

The methods for conducting the systematic review and meta-analysis are appropriate. The reporting is consistent with the PRISMA guidelines.

The following are points for consideration:

1. The Background section can be streamlined by integrating statements / sentences that repeat the same idea and presenting the ideas in a logical sequence that build a strong argument for the study. For instance, the ideas can flow from the importance of assessing satisfaction, the centrality of satisfaction with nursing care, and the utility of examining satisfaction with different aspects or elements of nursing care and predictors or factors influencing satisfaction. The utility can be related to guiding quality improvement initiatives. It also is helpful to contextualize, in more depth, the study; this could be done by describing in more depth the features in the Ethiopian healthcare system in general and nursing practice in specific.

2. It would be helpful to have a separate section, or subsection within the Background section, that presents the conceptualization of satisfaction with nursing care. The conceptualization can identify, define, operationalize and specify the relationships among 1) factors that influence satisfaction, 2) aspects or element of satisfaction with nursing care, and 3) consequences or effects of satisfaction on outcomes. It also is important to recognize the different conceptual definitions of satisfaction (e.g. appraisal of care relative to expectations) and realize that these definitions have led to variations in the operationalization and measurement of satisfaction with nursing care. Variability in measurement is a key methodological factor that could have accounted for the heterogeneity of the findings and should have been examined in the meta-analysis. Further, the factors listed in the third paragraph under Background could be categorized into patient and context related factors and those found / known to influence satisfaction with nursing care are emphasized and defined.
3. The rationale for focusing the systematic review / meta-analysis on the Ethiopian context could be strengthened. Some may argue that the limited number of studies, and the inconsistent and inconclusive findings across studies do not warrant or justify a systematic review or meta-analysis.

4. Please clarify the study selection criteria and the data extraction related to "overall patient satisfaction with nursing care". It is important to explain: if different instruments have been used to measure satisfaction; if the measures were unidimensional or multidimensional (assessing one or more aspects of nursing care); if multidimensional measures were used, how was a score quantifying overall satisfaction with nursing was calculated; and what criterion was used to determine high level of satisfaction within each study and across studies. Also, specify the factors that influence satisfaction that were of interest and for which pertinent data were extracted.

5. More information is needed to understand what data were extracted to quantify: level of satisfaction, prevalence, and association or relationship between each factor and satisfaction. It would be helpful to identify the key criteria for evaluating the quality of the studies (for readers who may not be familiar with the guidelines mentioned), to report on the quality of the studies reviewed, and to explain how the quality of the studies was accounted for (e.g. were low quality studies excluded from the systematic review / meta-analysis or was quality included as a methodological factor accounting for heterogeneity?). Did all studies report the OR to quantify the association between the factors and satisfaction or did some report the correlation / regression coefficient (which is most likely when a total score is usually used to quantify level of satisfaction); in the latter case, what formula was used to convert the correlation / regression coefficient into an OR? Estimating an OR requires dichotomizing the outcomes; this practice may not be well accepted / justified as dichotomizing a continuous variable has been found to reduce the richness of the data and to lower statistical power.

6. Why was a fixed effect model used to describe the level of overall satisfaction when the authors explain that a random effect model was used in the data analysis section? Did any study report on satisfaction with specific aspects or elements of nursing care?

7. The rationale for conducting the subgroup analysis by region is not justified. It should be part of the analysis to examine factors that may account for heterogeneity. Further, the investigation of heterogeneity is a bit confusing as the list of factors is not consistently presented across sections. For example, patient socio-demographic characteristics are mentioned in the Background and Discussion sections, but not in the Results sections. It is worth noting that methodological factors (e.g. sample size, type and reliability of measures) were not explicitly included as possible determinants of heterogeneity, knowing that measurement is a well recognized factor and should have been accounted for in the data analysis and most importantly, in the discussion.

8. Although the OP reported for the factors under investigation were statistically significant, they are not clinically meaningful - most OR are close to 1.0. This point should be acknowledged and discussed.
9. The discussion focuses primarily on restating the factors and reporting on findings from other countries for comparison. There is, however, limited interpretation of what the findings mean, discussion of methodological and/or conceptual factors that could possibly explain the differences in findings across studies, and presentation of implications for practice and/or future research.

**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.

No

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

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