Reviewer’s report

Title: 'Thinking outside the box': Advanced geriatric nursing in primary health care in Scandinavia

Version: 1 Date: 29 Apr 2018

Reviewer: Ruth Martin-Misener

Reviewer's report:

Implementation of the nurse practitioner (NP) role in primary health care is occurring worldwide as one solution to addressing the changing health needs of aging populations. This article provides new information about the status of role introduction in Scandinavia. Understanding the challenges associated with introducing the NP role is vitally important so that strategies can be developed to address barriers and enhance facilitators. This article makes an important contribution toward this. Below I offer some suggestions for strengthening the paper.

1. Overall the background was good, however, for international readers, it would be helpful to know something about the context of Scandinavian countries and the rationale for why considering them as a whole is a reasonable thing to do; for example, are there shared policies, resources, culture etc?

2. More information is needed about sample selection, including inclusion exclusion criteria and how recruitment occurred. It is a small sample size and the risk of selection bias is high. More detail about these processes would enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

3. I had some difficulty understanding themes one and two. Theme three, on the other hand, was excellent, very clearly presented with categories that reflected the supporting data.

Theme one was unclear to me largely because the theme and category names did not reflect the data being presented. For theme one, category one, at first when I read it, I thought it meant that participants thought that NPs were not competent. However, it then became clear from the data presented that they were talking about the inadequacies in the health care system and workforce as a whole. The data for theme one, seem to me to be more about the availability and utilization of a qualified workforce to meet older adults' complex needs.

Theme one, category two, lack of continuity, was similarly difficult to follow. This is perhaps, as an international reader, I do not understand the health care systems in Scandinavian countries and where the gaps in continuity are. Giving an example, of what would be a typical experience for older people would be helpful. Also within this category, the discussion regarding lack of continuity among team members seemed out of place. Since the category is about lack of continuity of care for older people, it would be helpful to express this challenge in those terms, i.e., what is the impact on continuity of care for older people as a result of the teamwork issues.
The second theme, Being at the heart of things, is a very interesting theme. I suggest that the authors consider including in the theme name that this refers to the NP role. It would signal more clearly to readers what the theme was about. Similarly, the paragraph that introduces this theme would be clearer if it listed the categories. I struggled with the naming of the first category, Someone reaching out. It is unclear who is reaching out to who and for what reason. Could the authors give some consideration to renaming this category to be more explicit?

4. In the presentation of findings it would be useful to indicate if the findings were generally similar or different across countries.

5. The discussion will need some revising based on changes as outlined above. The last paragraph in the discussion make some very important points that should be elaborated on.

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.

Yes

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

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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