Reviewer's report

Title: Do the structural and process quality indicators predict the outcome indicators? A cross-sectional survey to investigate the quality of nutritional care in Tuscan (Italy) nursing homes.

Version: 4
Date: 15 December 2014

Reviewer: Felipe Sandoval

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Title
Line 1
The authors should think of a different title, as the one presented, phrased as a question that could be answered immediately does not seem appropriate.

Introduction
Paragraph 1
Line 64
The authors should explain the context in which the concepts of effectiveness, efficiency, safety, equity, and appropriateness take place, regarding quality of care (macro, meso, etc.) and explain how and why is this relevant to the present study, please.

Paragraph 1
Line 69
The emphasis of the authors regarding that structure, process, and outcomes "should" be used in NHs to improve quality of care and life seems misplaced. There are alternatives and modifications to this model as well being considered.

Paragraph 3
Line 80
The authors seems to have established a hypothesis under the assumption that process and structures can be weighted independently (relative weight). However, since these elements are enabling of the element following, this idea seems rather off (Structure enables process, process enables outcome). Finally, there are no references to these relative weights in the results, discussion or conclusions, even though they appear in the introduction.

Methods
Paragraph 2
The authors could explain if these validations took place in Italy or elsewhere, and add the corresponding reference. In the case of partially included tests explain thoroughly the procedures followed.

Paragraph 10
Line 168
Would you kindly add a formula reference for the random logit model. Also a reference to the criteria to define random and fixed effects.

Paragraph 10
Line 174
What was the procedure to set the exclusion criteria for no statistically significant associations. Is this a conditional model?

Paragraph 11
Line 183
Would you kindly add the goodness-of-fit of this model, please.

Line 183
There are no mentions on what kind of statistical software was used. Especially regarding the multilevel model.

Results
Paragraph 7
Line 242
The definition of quality indicators seems rather imprecise. Could you elaborate more on the definition used for Quality Indicators in this study as shown in figure 1 (prevalence?) or the selection process, please. Also, there is no clear distinction among structural and process indicators as shown in figure 1.

Paragraph 9
Line 320
Since nutritional status may affect the physical functioning of the users, there should be a mention on the cross-sectional design of this study as a limitation.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests