Reviewer’s report

Title: The determinants and consequences of adult nurse staff turnover: a systematic review of systematic reviews

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Reviewer: Christine Kovner

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript covers an important topic that will likely be of interest to readers. I am not familiar with assessments of multiple systematic reviews but think from what these authors write such assessments are useful to readers.

I think the term "adult nurses" is confusing. I did not realize what the term meant until page 6 when the authors defined the term. I thought they meant nurses 18 and over and couldn't figure out how someone under 18 could be a nurse. I am familiar with the literature on nurse turnover and don't recall that many published articles identify that they are about nurses who only care for adults. The authors should assure the reader that all the articles in the systematic reviews limit their analyses to nurses who care for adults. One can assume that if the samples are restricted to nurses who work in hospital adult med surg units they care only for adults, but if the samples include emergency room nurses one can not be sure of that. For example on page 7 they exclude any review that did not evaluate adult nurse turnover.

The manuscript could be strengthened by separating/clarifying findings related to leaving a position and leaving the profession (see p. 17 for example)

I was puzzled about why the authors included both determinants and consequences of turnover, which are conceptually quite different, when there was only one systematic review of consequences.

p. 1 I had trouble understanding the 3rd sentence. In the 4th sentence author should clarify that the data cited are from the U.S. and Canada only. Many in the U.S. (particularly Buerhaus) would argue with the conclusion of the BLS.

p. 7 I was confused by the 4th bullet. I didn't think that all of the systematic reviews reported on both determinants AND consequences from what the authors wrote. Similarly, I didn't understand the last two bullets. Maybe use different words than "study(review) design."

p. 8 Authors say that they searched data bases from inception to 2015, but in other place they say they limited to 1990-2015. Perhaps they mean that the limited search to 1990 and later unless the index did not begin until after 1990 and they limited the search to the date of inception til 2015. See for example p 21 third line from the bottom. Final bullet on page 8 they say that any
discrepancies between two reviewers .... resolved... with third reviewer" but MH (3rd reviewer) was also an original reviewer. How did that work?

The authors did a good job of organizing the findings into categories that made sense. But results section was hard to follow, but that is primarily because the literature is so complicated. Of particular note is that the various study authors used turnover OR retention OR intent to stay OR intent to leave, making synthesizing difficult.

p. 16 Supervisor support is a strong finding, but get buried on p. 16 as does group cohesion - maybe highlight those at the beginning of the Interpersonal determinants section. This is also buried at the top of p. 20, when it could lead a paragraph

Perhaps results reporting could be improved by having a topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph. For example: "The following 11 determinants were reported..." or after the second sentence a summary sentence Age (negative), marital status (positive), more education (positive) were related to turnover.

In the concluding remarks section the last sentence is a key and important sentence. This should have been highlighted in the results section.

I was unable to read Figure 2

There are a number of small editing issues.

p. 1. first sentence should be "is an issue" or "are issues" It is not clear what the subject of the sentence is "Nurses leaving...." singular or "Nurses leaving their jobs AND nurses leaving the profession" (plural)

p. 6 first sentence of 2nd paragraph "models" (except those modeling clothes) don't "call upon" researchers/authors do. Last sentence would be clearer as "we conduct an overview with is a systematic review of systematic reviews"

p. 9 last sentence in first paragraph -- does author really mean between (e.g. MH and OB) or among (e.g. MH, OB, and CB discussing together).

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.

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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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