Reviewer’s report

Title: Nurse staffing in large general hospitals in China: An observational study

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Xu Liu

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for your submission on describing the daytime and nighttime NTP ratios, as well as the NTP ratios in different regions and departments in China. Your group did a lot of work on investigating NTP ratios. Kindly consider the following comments and reorganize your paper.

Major issues:

1. There are numerous grammatical errors throughout the paper.

Background:

2. It's hard to follow your thoughts when reading the background part. The reason why you concern NTP ratio was not clear. You should also tell the readers why you chose class A tertiary hospitals and why you want to explore the differences in the NTP ratios among different apartments and regions.

3. NTP and patient-to-nurse ratio altered arbitrarily in your paper. Select one and keep consistent.

4. Pay attention to use reference 16, I think it is hard to draw the conclusion that you mentioned in your paper.

5. Some points had nothing to do with your topic. For example, the different distribution of adverse events on weekdays versus weekends.
Method:

6. The procedure of data collection was not clearly stated. Did you mean that all of the data was collected on August 28, 2017, at 10 am and 10 pm? Then how did you make it? Why did you choose the time points as 10 am and 10 pm?

Results:

7. You'd better not repeat the results in text, especially the data that were showed in the tables. Summarize the characteristics of the findings instead.

Discussion:

8. When you compare the NTP among different countries, you should make sure that the same method are used to measure NTP in these countries, in other words, make sure that the ratios are comparable.

9. Reference 6 (Year 2005) and 7 (Year 2007) are too old to be used in comparison.

10. Some opinions were inappropriate, even unwarranted and misleading according to the results of this study. For example, page 12, line 51-56, how did this study show that "even regions with more nurses would not have … during the daytime versus nighttime?" Besides, I don't think the four reasons you presented on page 13, line 28-54 are possible reasons for the absence of mandatory nighttime NTP ratios in Chinese hospitals, especially the fourth point. Also, I did not agree with your opinion that "the growing number of inpatients in recent years may indicate that some hospital admissions are medically unnecessary and thus waste health care resources and cause additional pressure on nurses" (page 14, line 9-17).

11. Page 14, line 24, "professional satisfaction" was not mentioned before, and it's inappropriate to put forward new variable in discussion part.

12. The first limitation was inappropriate because "determining contributing factors to the NTP ratio" was neither your study aim nor study content.
13. Your conclusion seems to digress from the topic of your study.

Minor issues:

1. Page 2, line 9: You should tell the full name of NTP when you mention NTP for the first time, that is you should express as "nurse-to-patient (NTP)".

2. Page 2, line 11-12: End the sentence with a period instead of a comma.

3. Page 2, line 16-17: aim----aims. Pay attention to the third-person singular form.


5. Page 2, line 24: "Date" or "Data"?

6. Check if you made mistakes on following points: Page 3, line 52-53, "The AB 394 Act"; Page 4, line 11-12, "(1:4) to 5-20"; Page 4, line 36, "maximum" or "minimum"? (since you said NTP as 1:8 was a minimum ratio on Page 12, line 21-22); Page 4, line 48-49, "patient-to-patient" or "nurse-to-patient"?

7. What does it mean by "operating beds" and "treating/dispensing nurse"? What's the difference between "lead nurse" and "head nurse"?

8. A lot of necessary references were absence throughout the paper.

9. The keywords should be medical subject headings (MeSH) that could be searched in MEDLINE.

**Level of interest**

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
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