Reviewer's report

Title: Impacts of information and communication technologies on nursing care: an overview of systematic reviews (protocol)

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Reviewer: Paul Shekelle

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I have read that authors' response letter and their revised manuscript - with revisions to only a handful of lines. I am willing to go along with their choice of the nursing outcomes as the primary outcomes and relegate patient health outcomes to secondary status or not even included at all. I will note that there will be many readers, and reviewers, of their resulting systematic review that will require direct tests of the hypothesis that these ICT interventions improve patient outcomes, and will not accept the assumption that if the nursing outcomes improve then this necessarily must mean that nursing-sensitive patient outcomes must also improve. And I am willing to go along with their one-sentence acknowledgment that implementation and context are important issues - I think much work is contained within that one sentence!

But the part that still confuses me is the difference between "no intervention" and "usual care". The authors say the "usual care" group receives "standard care/practice". "Standard care/practice" is, by definition, what is occurring naturally in the health care environment, without any intervention on the part of the investigators. How then, can there be a "no intervention" group? This must mean that the group does NOT receive what is occurring naturally in the health care environment. Does this mean that "standard care/practice" is actually withdrawn from such a group? Is this ethical? Perhaps instead of a hypothetical explanation what is the difference between these two, the authors could provide a concrete example of a "no intervention" group, in a published paper?