OPEN PEER REVIEW

Open Peer Review (OPR)

As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

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An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

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- Education of both authors and new students
- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

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Peer Review Report for "Designing Accreditation Standards for Limited Surgery Facilities in Iran"

Author(s): Nader Asgari, Somayeh Hessam, Iravan Masoudi Asl, Shaghayegh Vahdat

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 5 Nov 2019
Revised Date: 4 Jul 2020
Accepted Date: 24 Jul 2020

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | Revision (0)

17 Dec 2019

Dear authors,
Abstract section:
In the method you said that the study is descriptive; however, in the first phase, you reviewed the studies and extracted criteria and then used of Delphi method. This study used several methods. Describe and declare the type of the study.
Describe the studies review process,
Describe the number of studies, and demonstrate studies in a Table.
Write findings based on the study phases, for example: how many studies were reviewed?
Write a conclusion based on the study findings.
Introduction:
Write more about the benefits of accreditation
The introduction should be improved
The last paragraph of the introduction should be revised
Write the importance of the study.
Method:
Describe the study's review process in detail.
Write the type of the study
Who participants were selected?
Write ethical consideration

Discussion:
Write briefly the first eight-line in the discussion.
The discussion is weak. Describe and interpret findings and use of other studies.
Conclusion:
Write a conclusion based on the findings.
Write the ethical code, project code, and acknowledgment.
Decrease the tables and charts.
Use of more references in the study.
Use of new references in the study.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) 19 Dec 2019

Introduction:
The introduction should be edited by a native editor.
In the section of the introduction, please write the whole phrase of acronyms.
Methods:
Was any software used? If yes, please mention it.
Please explain more about the DEMATEL method and fuzzy ANP method.
And express why did you select these methods?
Results:
In the result section, please add the respondent's characteristics.
Discussions:
In the discussion section, there is not any comparison to other studies.
In addition, it is better to write the limitations and strengths of the study.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (0) 24 Dec 2019

Dear Editor,

The first round of revision for this manuscript is finished. According to the reviewer comments, the manuscript needs “Major Revision”.

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (0) 24 Dec 2019

Dear Author,

The first round of revision for this manuscript is finished. According to the reviewer

comments, the manuscript needs “Major Revision”.

Best Regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Reviewer 1:

Abstract section:

1- In the method you said that the study is descriptive; however, in the first phase you reviewed the studies and extracted criteria and then used of Delphi method. In This study used of several methods. Describe and declare type of the study.

Type of study changed to "mix method"

2- Describe the studies review process,

It was added:

The Research Background included:

- Qualitative expert interviews
- Conceptual model Categories
- First step: expert opinion
- Modified primary model
- Second step: expert opinion
- Prioritize sub criteria
- Third step: expert opinion
- Achieving Main and Sub Categories
- Fuzzy DEMATEL method
- Prioritize factors

3-Describe number of studies, and demonstrate studies in a Table.

It was done. Because of limitation in table number, it was added as text.

4-Write findings based on the study phases, for example: how many studies were review?

Method and finding section for extraction of the basic concepts of criteria changed based to the expert interviews instead of reviewing the countries models.

5-Write conclusion based on the study findings.

Conclusion was revised

Introduction:

6- Write more about benefits of accreditation

It is added: Accreditation is the most powerful control and assessment tool to achieve the mentioned goals, which is described through the approval of a health care organization with respect to meeting predetermined standards by an external peer review team independent of the same organizational level as well as its qualification by trained homogeneous groups based on realization of minimum standards. Accreditation also provides a framework to help create and implement systems and processes that improve operational effectiveness and advance positive health outcomes.

7-Introduction should be improved

Introduction changed and new reference was added

8- The last paragraph of introduction should be revised

It was revised completely.

9- Write the important of study.

It was added: Although there are over 110,000 active medical institutions throughout Iran, which should offer service according to quality standards and meet certain criteria, there are no assessment standards for limited surgery facilities in Iran. So considering the importance of quality control for limited surgery facilities in surgical interventions for health care, high costs of operations, large number of patients and clients, designing an accreditation model to ensure the quality of performance of these facilities is important .

Method:

10-Describe about the studies review process detail.

Proposal model of study was shown in figure 1.

11-Write the type of the study

Type of study changed to "mix method"

12-Who participants were selected?

It was added: The research community included policymakers and accreditation experts, twenty of whom were selected by snowball method until the researcher was satisfied

13-Write ethical consideration

It was added**:**

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the research ethics committee of Islamic Azad University Medical Sciences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the study, and individual identifiers were not used during data analysis.

Discussion:

14-Write briefly the first eight line in discussion.

It was summarized in one senescence: Considering the importance of quality control for limited surgery to be inevitable .

15-Discussion is weak. Describe and interpret findings and use of other studies.

It was added: Chatterjee and et al. (2016) state that the quality improvement and patient safety due to the accreditation, is a major priority for decision-makers and the public in today's dynamic healthcare environment [4]. Quality improvement, risk management, patient safety, improved efficiency, and accountability are the main domain of the organizations that participate in accreditation, based on the report that published by Accreditation Canada in 2013 [22]. Pearcy and Terranova (2013) also highlights the issue of patient safety as the most important issue in the accreditation of outpatient units, which is consistent with the present study [23]. Also, study of accreditation models for limited surgical centers in the world e.g., Joint international commission (JCI) [24], Accreditation Canada International (ACI)[25], and American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF ([26], revealed that the patient safety has top priority in the designing model of the accreditation, which is compatible with our results.

In formulating of standards regarding to the quality and safety of care, the individual and especially the family should be considered as the basis for standard formulation, and the formulation of

patient-centered standards is a top priority [27]. Although patient rights, it gained a little weight and was considered the ninth factor in the designed model of the present study, this issue should be taken into consideration in the formulation of standards along with the patient's family rights. Clinical care standards as another part of the designed model could include surgical and anesthetic care, continuing are after surgery an safe discharge and follow-up of patient. In the AAAASF accreditation model, there has been a strong emphasis on effective operating room policies, safety and environmental management, safe drug management, information registration, anesthesia service safety. This issue emphasizes the accreditation standards of the American Outpatient Accreditation Association (AAAHC) on patient rights, center management and leadership, quality of service provided, information registration, pharmaceutical services, safe and effective anesthesia and surgery, and quality management and promotion. It is consistent with most of the domains and dimensions obtained from the present study [28]. Springer's (2002) research also highlights the areas of building standards and facilities, sterilization, equipment, recovery, safety, medicine, and data recording that are compatible with the results of the present study [29].

Conclusion:
16-Write conclusion based on the findings.
It was revised

17- Write the ethical code, project code, and acknowledgment.
They were added.

18- Decrease the tables and charts.
It was done: 3 figure and 3 table.

19- Use of more references in the study.
It was done:

4. Chatterjee, A., P. Awasthi, and S. Basukala, *Impact of Accreditation on the Quality of Healthcare Services: A Systematic Review of the Literature.* International Journal of Scientific Research, 2016. **5**(7).
10. Avia, I. and R.T.S. Hariyati, *Impact of hospital accreditation on quality of care: A literature review.* Enfermeria clinica, 2019. **29**: p. 315-320.
11. Greenfield, D., et al., *Health service accreditation stimulating change in clinical care and human resource management processes: A study of 311 Australian hospitals.* Health policy, 2019. **123**(7): p. 661-665.
12. Behera, S.K., S.N. Smith, and T.A. Tacy, *Impact of accreditation on quality in echocardiograms: a quantitative approach.* Journal of the American Society of Echocardiography, 2017. **30**(9): p. 913-922.
13. Nicklin, W., et al., *Leveraging the full value and impact of accreditation.* International Journal for Quality in Health Care, 2017. **29**(2): p. 310-312.
24. JCI, *Joint Commission International. Accreditation Standards for Ambulatory Care.* 3RD Edition, Standards-only version. America; 2015., 2015.
25. ACI, *Accreditation Canada International (ACI). Independent Medical/Surgical Facilities Standards.* Canada: Accreditation Canada, 2016.
26. AAAASF, *American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc. Regular Standards and Checklist for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities* Version 14.5 (March 2017). AAAASF Group, 2017.

20- Use of new references in the study.

It was done

4. Chatterjee, A., P. Awasthi, and S. Basukala, *Impact of Accreditation on the Quality of Healthcare Services: A Systematic Review of the Literature*. International Journal of Scientific Research, 2016. **5**(7).
10. Avia, I. and R.T.S. Hariyati, *Impact of hospital accreditation on quality of care: A literature review*. Enfermeria clinica, 2019. **29**: p. 315-320.
11. Greenfield, D., et al., *Health service accreditation stimulating change in clinical care and human resource management processes: A study of 311 Australian hospitals*. Health policy, 2019. **123**(7): p. 661-665.
12. Behera, S.K., S.N. Smith, and T.A. Tacy, *Impact of accreditation on quality in echocardiograms: a quantitative approach*. Journal of the American Society of Echocardiography, 2017. **30**(9): p. 913-922.
13. Nicklin, W., et al., *Leveraging the full value and impact of accreditation*. International Journal for Quality in Health Care, 2017. **29**(2): p. 310-312.
24. JCI, *Joint Commission International. Accreditation Standards for Ambulatory Care*. 3RD Edition, Standards-only version. America; 2015., 2015.
25. ACI, *Accreditation Canada International (ACI). Independent Medical/Surgical Facilities Standards*. Canada: Accreditation Canada, 2016.
26. AAAASF, *American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc. Regular Standards and Checklist for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities* Version 14.5 (March 2017). AAAASF Group, 2017.

Reviewer 2:

Introduction:

1- The introduction should be edited by a native editor.

The whole document was native edited by parsian Teb Company.

2-In the section of introduction, please write the whole phrase of acronyms

It was done: *Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)*

Methods:

3-Was any software used? If yes, please mention to it.

It was added: Data were analysed using Excel software 2013.

4- Please explain more about DEMATEL method and fuzzy ANP method. And express why did you select these methods?

It was added: In multiple criteria decision making (MCDM) methods, the analytic network process (ANP) is used to overcome the problems of interdependence and feedback between criteria or alternatives.

Results:

5- In the result section, please add respondents characteristics.

In the method section mentioned that: The research community included policymakers and accreditation experts, twenty of whom were selected by snowball method until the researcher was satisfied.

Discussions:

6- In the discussion section there is not any comparison to other studies. In addition it is better to write the limitations and strengths of the study.

As said before comparison to other studies was added.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (1) 21 Apr 2020

- The method section is not clear and needs Major Revision.
- Abstract: Method section: What is the mean of “to satisfy the researcher”? Is it true? Or data saturation?
- Method: twenty of whom were selected by snowball method until “the researcher was satisfied”?
- This study is not a qualitative study. The authors used of Delphi method for gathering expert opinions. Consult with an expert researcher and rewrite the method section.

- To respond to comment no. 3. (Describe the number of studies, and demonstrate studies in a Table) The authors responded: It was done. Because of the limitation in the table number, it was added as text. Again, where the section of the method or results be revised?

- How the conceptual model was obtained in the first step?

- How the questionnaire was sent to experts and gathered?

- Write experts’ characteristics in a Table.

- Demonstrated about “second questionnaire”, how many questions? What questions?

- Demonstrated about “third questionnaire”, how many questions? What questions?

- Describe the consent form completing the process in the study.

- Write the ethical code of the project.

Rewrite the result section.
- Remove the following sentence from the result section:
“The questionnaire was then sent to experts based on the modified model and the definitive mean showed the agreement rates of experts with each of the research criteria”
"In this stage, the second questionnaire was prepared and sent back to expert team members together with the previous point of view of each individual and the degree of its disagreement with viewpoints of other experts. In the second stage, the expert team members again responded to the questions with regard to the views of other group members

as well as the changes made to sub-criterion"
- Some of the sentences in the results section are related to Method. Rewrite again result from the section.
- Rewrite Tables again. Use of English approach. Consult with an English Language expert.

Best,

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (1)** 25 Apr 2020

Dear Editor,

The second round of the review process is finished. According to reviewer comments, the manuscript needs “Major revision”.

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision (1)** 25 Apr 2020

Dear Author
The second round of the review process is finished. According to reviewer comments, the manuscript needs “Major revision”.
Best Regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

The method section is not clear and need Major Revision.

We revised some parts of the research method.

- Abstract: Method section: What is mean of “to satisfy the researcher”? Is it true? Or data saturation?

We changed “to satisfy the researcher” to” to achieve data saturation”

- Method: twenty of whom were selected by snowball method until “the researcher was satisfied”?

It was edited: Twenty of whom were selected by snowball method until was achieved data saturation

- This study is not a qualitative study. The authors used of Delphi method for gathering expert opinions. Consult with an expert researcher and rewrite method section.

It was edited:

This mix method research was done in 2019. The research community included policymakers and accreditation experts, twenty of whom were selected by snowball method until was achieved data saturation (table 1).

Main concepts of criteria were designed qualitative expert interviews. The experts were then requested to qualitatively rate the importance of each criterion based on five-point Likert scale from highly important to unimportant. The criteria included the basic content of standards related to limited surgery facilities. The Research Background included:

Qualitative step:
- Qualitative expert interviews
- Conceptual model Categories
- First step: expert opinion
- Modified primary model
- Second step: expert opinion
- Prioritize sub criteria
- Third step: expert opinion
- Achieving Main and Sub Categories

Quantitative step:
- Fuzzy DEMATEL method
- Prioritize factors

- To response to comment no. 3. (Describe number of studies, and demonstrate studies in a Table) The authors responded: It was done. Because of limitation in table number, it was added as text. Again, where section of method or results be revised?

Here to extract the first conceptual model we used the expert opinion based on the first questionnaire not from comparative studies. So there is no need to show it in a table

- How the conceptual model was obtained in the first step?

It was edited:

At this stage, the initial conceptual model was obtained from an interview with experts, the conceptual model was presented to members of expert team along with the description of sub-criterion, and the degree of experts' agreement with each of the indicators was obtained and their suggestions and modifications classified.

- How the questionnaire was sent to experts and gathered?

It was added:

The questionnaire was sent to experts by email

- Write experts' characteristics in a Table.

This table was added:

experts' characteristics		frequency	percent
position	Policy maker	8	40%
	accreditation experts	12	60%
sex	Male	7	35%
	female	13	65%
Academic degree	MSc	9	45%
	Ph.D	6	30%
	MD	5	25%

- Demonstrated about "second questionnaire", how many question? What questions?

In this study we had 4 questionnaires:

The first questionnaire had 4 questions that asked the main concepts of criteria were designed qualitative expert interviews. The experts were then requested to qualitatively rate the importance of each criterion based on five-point Likert scale from highly important to unimportant. Then the first conceptual model was made.

The second questionnaire had 32 questions, that asked expert opinion about the content of criteria and sub-criteria that affect the quality of care in limited surgery facilities based on the conceptual model.

The third questionnaire had 21 questions that ask the expert opinion about the main criteria and sub-criteria of the extracted conceptual model (as mentioned in figure 1 and table 2).

The fourth questionnaire had 3 questions that asked the expert opinion with considering the previous point of view of each expert and the degree of its disagreement with viewpoints of others continuing the expert's opinion in the previous step.

- Demonstrated about “third questionnaire”, how many question? What questions?

The third questionnaire had 3 questions that asked the expert opinion with considering the previous point of view of each expert and the degree of its disagreement with viewpoints of others continuing the expert's opinion in the previous step.

- Describe about consent form completing process in the study.

First, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and how to answer the questionnaire to the group of experts, and after obtaining consent, the questionnaire was emailed to them.

- Write the ethical code of the project.

It is underway.

All rights reserved for Islamic Azad University of Medical Sciences. This study is extracted from a doctoral dissertation that was approved in January 2017. Due to the prevalence of corona viruses in the country and the prohibition of physical presence in the university, obtaining ethical approval code from the research ethics committee is underway.

Rewrite result section.
- Remove following sentence of the result section:
“The questionnaire was then sent to experts based on the modified model and the definitive mean showed the agreement rates of experts with each of the research criteria”

"In this stage, the second questionnaire was prepared and sent back to expert team members together with the previous point of view of each individual and the degree of its disagreement with viewpoints of other experts. In the second stage, the expert team members again responded to the questions with regard to the views of other group members as well as the changes made to sub-criterion"

It was done

- Some of the sentences in the results section are related to Method. Rewrite again result section.

It was done

- Rewrite Tables again. Use of English approach. Consult with an English Language expert.

The whole document was edited by nitio through a reputable site (https://ptebco.com)

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (2) 3 Jun 2020

Dear Editor,

The comments for this manuscript are as follows:
1. I think that the authors used the Delphi Method in their research, but they didn't mention it explicitly. Please revise the method section according to this method.
2. Some explanations that are mentioned in the result part belong to the method part. Please revise the results and write only the results of the study in this section.
3. The manuscript needs an English language edition.

Best Regards

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (2) 6 Jun 2020

Dear Editor,

According to reviewer comments, the manuscript needs "Minor Revision".

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (2) 9 Jun 2020

Dear author
according to reviewer comments, the manuscript needs "Minor Revision".
Best Regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (3)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

1. I think that the authors used the Delphi Method in their research, but they didn't mention it explicitly. Please revise the method section according to this method.

First step:
First we applied the Delphi method. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and how to answer the questionnaire to the group of experts, and after obtaining consent, the questionnaire was emailed to them.
The second questionnaire had 32 questions, that asked expert opinion about the content of criteria and sub-criteria that affect the quality of care in limited surgery facilities based on the conceptual model

Qualitative step:

- Qualitative expert interviews
- Conceptual model Categories
- First step: expert opinion (by questionnaire)
- Modified primary model
- Second step: expert opinion (by questionnaire)
- Prioritize sub criteria
- Third step: expert opinion
- Achieving Main and Sub Categories

2. Some explanations that are mentioned in the result part are belonged to the method part. Please revise the results and write only the results of the study in this section.

To compare between criteria, five verbal expressions have been used. The Linguistic options, their definite numbers and also triangular fuzzy numbers were as bellow:

- Very large impact (Definite numbers=4): (1، 1، 0.75)
- Large impact (Definite numbers=3): (1، 0.75، 0.5)
- Low impact (Definite numbers=2): (0.75، 0.5، 0.25)
- Very low impact (Definite numbers=1): (0.5، 0.25، 0)
- No effect(Definite numbers=0): (0.25، 0، 0)

The results showed the main content and sub-criteria of accreditation standards for limited surgery facilities, after which the components affecting limited surgery centers were identified using the DEMATEL method [17].

3. The manuscript need English language edit.

The whole document was edited by nitio through a reputable site (https://ptebco.com)

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (3)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (3) 21 Jul 2020

Dear Editor,

The manuscript is acceptable for publication.

Best Regards

REFEREE: EIC | **Revision** (3) 24 Jul 2020

Dear author
Your article has been accepted for publication.
Best regards