

## PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

### ARTICLE DETAILS

<b>TITLE (PROVISIONAL)</b>	Inpatient' s satisfaction with nursing care in a backward region: a cross-sectional study from northwestern China
<b>AUTHORS</b>	Zhang, J; Yang, Limei; Wang, Xiaoying; Dai, Jiao; Shan, Wenjing; Wang, Jiancheng

### VERSION 1 – REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	alvisa palese University of Udine, Italy
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	22-Sep-2019

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>I appreciated the paper that is timely and important in the field; however, I have the following concerns.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In the introduction, the focus is clearly reported; however, some links such as the relation between the patient satisfaction and the violent episodes toward nurses is not clear. Moreover, I suggest to revised the contents and to provide a better presentation of the available literature: for example, I appreciate the mention of the study performed in some countries but there are several cross countries studies performed to date thus I suggest to increase this section. Therefore, in general al suggest to divide the introduction in two different section, the first explaining the general issue, with the aims of the study at the end; the second section summarising the evidence available in the field.</li><li>2. There are inconsistencies in some section of the study: for example, in the introduction you reported that no previous studies have been performed; but later with the reference number 24, you reported that the instrument evaluating the satisfaction with nursing care was validated previously by Jiao et al. I suggest to align the contents across the manuscript.</li><li>3. In the methods, there is a need to change the order. Firstly, the study design should be reported; secondly the setting and the participants data. Moreover, in this section as that commented above, several typos mistakes and or grammar mistakes should be revised.</li><li>4. More data should be reported regarding the data collection process, as for example the amount pf patients who refused to participate and the reasons.</li><li>5. Data analysis should also be more detailed, for example by reporting how to you have handled the missed data. Moreover, the profile of the patients involved should be reported in the first section of the findings and not here.</li><li>6. The presentation of the findings should respect the tables and its flow. Therefore, I strongly suggest to revise the findings and its content. Overall scores should also be reported at the end of the table 2, and in general, before it is required to present the participants; then the end point (the satisfaction your case) and then</li></ol>
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	<p>the bivariate analysis.</p> <p>7. Given the opportunity to produce more evidence, I also suggest to complete the analysis by performing a logistic regression analysis or a linear regression analysis therefore moving forward the data analysis to a more complex model than that based upon a bivariate analysis.</p> <p>The study is interesting and the readers can understand its value given the setting where it was performed. However I suggest to improve its methodological quality</p>
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Ahtisham Younas Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	22-Sep-2019

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript entitled "Inpatients' satisfaction with nursing care at a tertiary hospital in Gansu, China: a cross-sectional study". This study has the potential to inform global health care community about the quality of nursing care from Chinese context. However, several revisions are needed to make this manuscript publishable. Please find below my suggestions/ recommendations.</p> <p>Major Comments</p> <p>Abstract</p> <p>1. Under conclusions, I feel the authors provided a general statement regarding the implications of this study. Please provide more specific implications such as what factors should be considered by nursing administrators and clinical nurses?</p> <p>Strengths and Limitations</p> <p>1. The second limitation. I don't think this is a limitation. Do the authors have any reference to support that patient satisfaction could change over the weekend than over the weekdays? Please revisit and clarify.</p> <p>2. The third limitation. How can qualitative interviews help in exploring "true thoughts"? Do the authors mean more comprehensive understanding? Please clarify.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>1. The authors' rationale for this study was a lack of studies in the Gansu province. I feel this is not a strong rationale for this study. Please revisit your background and explain how this study is useful for global community. In other words, please justify the international relevance and need for this study, when there are already an ample studies on patient satisfaction.</p> <p>2. The authors provided a single definition of patient satisfaction. Please clarify if this definition was adopted for this study and if the definition consistent with that of used in the Newcastle Satisfaction Scale.</p> <p>3. Lines 87-90. "From the time of admission, nurses provide care for patients every day without fail until discharge, involve in almost every aspect of patients, therefore they comprise the majority of health care providers." This statement is ambiguous. Please rephrase.</p> <p>4. Line 95. Please remove the word "Anyway" as it is not used in scholarly writing.</p> <p>5. Line 98. "The ratio is 1:0, 426". I don't think this is correct. Please clarify.</p> <p>6. Line 109-110. Please differentiate between A and B class hospitals.</p> <p>7. Line 117. What do the authors mean by unfaithful reports? Please clarify.</p> <p>8. I find the background section does not include a better description</p>
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of the differences in the nursing services between the hospitals in Gansu province and those of other provinces. Please provide more description.

#### Methods

1. Line 151. "The sample of the study was determined using simple stochastic sampling". Do the authors mean "simple random sampling" rather than stochastic sampling? Please correct.
2. It is not clear how a random sample was allocated by the nurse manager when the data was in fact collected by the trained students. Please clarify.
3. Please provide more information about the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. Did the authors' pilot test the instrument? If so, please provide brief information.
4. Under patient and public involvement, lines 193-194. Please rephrase the statements as these are vague.

#### Data Collection

1. Line 201. Please provide a little bit more details about the training of students for data collection. For example, how long the training lasted?
2. Line 206. The authors stated that for some patients the data collectors completed the questionnaire. In such cases, please clarify if the data collectors urged the patients to complete the questionnaire?

#### Data Analysis

1. The authors stated that the scores were dichotomized. This practice is not recommended anymore due to the loss of information. Also some of the information is already lost due to the use of Likert scale. Please provide a rationale for this dichotomization.

#### Results

1. The authors provided titles of two nurses. Junior and Senior. Please explain how this differentiated was reached at. Was it based on the years of experience, qualification or so forth?
2. The authors used the data about history of admission. I am not sure what the authors mean by this. As per the inclusion criteria the patients had to be admitted for at least 48 hours which means all of them were admitted to the hospital. Please clarify.

#### Discussion

1. There is a discussion about the general implications of this study, but areas of future research should be highlighted.
2. Line 267. "Strengthen rectification". Please clarify what the authors mean by rectification?
3. Lines 306-307. "This could be that unmarried patients pay more attention to the impact of diseases on their future life. Therefore, they have relatively more demand for healthcare knowledge, and engaging in treatment decision-making". I feel this statement undermines the importance of health and quality care for the elderly and married people. I am not sure this can be supported with any data. Please provide a reference or rephrase.
4. Lines 340-345. The authors discussed how nurses should be more empathetic and synthetic with the patients. I feel this discussion is not supported by the study findings. Nurses' sympathy, empathy, and compassion are altogether different constructs from nursing care. Also, the Newcastle Satisfaction does not measure nurses' sympathy and empathy. Therefore, I suggest please remove this discussion and focus on other aspects of nursing care that are directly relevant to your findings.

#### Minor Comments

The manuscript is hampered with grammatical errors and ambiguous terms. Please revisit the whole manuscript and correct the grammatical errors. Some of the examples are:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under Abstract, page 2, lines 42-43. The word treatment and respect should be changed to treated and respected.</li> <li>• Under Abstract, page 2, lines 45-46. What do the authors mean by in-charged by junior nurses?</li> <li>• Under Abstract, page 2, lines 48. "Nurses should be more sensitive with the factors"... can be changed to "sensitive to".</li> <li>• Under Background, page 4, line 83. The word golden standard should be gold standard.</li> <li>• Under Background, page 4, line 107. "Was carry out national wide" can be changed to was carried out nationwide or at a national level.</li> <li>• Under Discussion, page 14, line 263. The spellings of Spain are wrong.</li> <li>• Under conclusion, line 356. "The word "communicational" should be communication.</li> </ul>
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Foroozan Atashzadeh-Shoorideh School of Nursing & Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	03-Oct-2019

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Thank you for submitting the manuscript entitled "Inpatients' satisfaction with nursing care at a tertiary hospital in Gansu, China: a cross-sectional study" to this journal. There are some challenges regarding the manuscript as follows:</p> <p><b>Abstract</b> The aim of this study was "to examine the level of patient satisfaction with nursing care and identify the factors affecting satisfaction from the in-patients' viewpoints", while it is different from the title of this manuscript. The study was conducted at a tertiary hospital located in the Northwest of China, which is not generalizing to other setting. I recommend submit this manuscript in a national journal.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b> The description and explanation of violence in Chinese nurses is not consistent with the title of this research. So, the lines 119-24 must be omitted. The necessary of this study is missed. Thus, the introduction must develop and current challenge about research variables must well explain. Detailed literature review helps the readers to study about past studies about these variables. This section needs development, too. On the other hand, the second aim of this study is "to investigate the influence factors affecting patient satisfaction with nursing care" however there was not any explanation about this challenge in the introduction section". Research hypothesis and model of study clearly described. But, hypothesis did not demonstrated in the model. The model is a little ambiguous.</p> <p><b>Method</b> The authors wrote "Patients were excluded on any one of the following conditions: critical illness or cognitive impairment that affects judgement; inability to provide written informed consent." They are not exclusion criteria. In my opinion, these patients must not be selected for this research. In exclusion criteria, the participants enter the research and in the study time exclude based on any reasons. Is there any cut off point for instruments. Which method used for validity and reliability for instruments?</p> <p><b>Finding, Discussion and conclusion</b> The above section well developed. Hope the above comments help you to develop the manuscript.</p>
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## VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

1. In the introduction, the focus is clearly reported; however, some links such as the relation between the patient satisfaction and the violent episodes toward nurses is not clear. Moreover, I suggest to revised the contents and to provide a better presentation of the available literature: for example, I appreciate the mention of the study performed in some countries but there are several cross countries studies performed to date thus I suggest to increase this section. Therefore, in general I suggest to divide the introduction in two different section, the first explaining the general issue, with the aims of the study at the end; the second section summarising the evidence available in the field.

Answer: The introduction section has been revised accordingly, please check.

2. There are inconsistencies in some section of the study: for example, in the introduction you reported that no previous studies have been performed; but later with the reference number 24, you reported that the instrument evaluating the satisfaction with nursing care was validated previously by Jiao et al. I suggest to align the contents across the manuscript.

Answer: It should be no previous studies have been performed using Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Scale in Northwestern of China. The statement was revised in line 195-196, please check.

3. In the methods, there is a need to change the order. Firstly, the study design should be reported; secondly the setting and the participants data. Moreover, in this section as that commented above, several typos mistakes and or grammar mistakes should be revised.

Answer: The order has been changed accordingly in the methods section, please check.

4. More data should be reported regarding the data collection process, as for example the amount pf patients who refused to participate and the reasons.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly in study setting and the participants section in line 236-237, please check.

5. Data analysis should also be more detailed, for example by reporting how to you have handled the missed data. Moreover, the profile of the patients involved should be reported in the first section of the findings and not here.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly in data analysis section, please check.

6. The presentation of the findings should respect the tables and its flow. Therefore, I strongly suggest to revise the findings and its content. Overall scores should also be reported at the end of the table 2, and in general, before it is required to present the participants; then the end point (the satisfaction your case) and then the bivariate analysis.

Answer: The content in table 1,3,4 has been modified accordingly, please check.

7. Given the opportunity to produce more evidence, I also suggest to complete the analysis by performing a logistic regression analysis or a linear regression analysis therefore moving forward the data analysis to a more complex model than that based upon a bivariate analysis.

Answer: logistic regression analysis has been performed accordingly which showed in table 4, please check.

The study is interesting and the readers can understand its value given the setting where it was performed. However I suggest to improve its methodological quality

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

Reviewer: 2

Reviewer Name: Ahtisham Younas

Major Comments

Abstract

1. Under conclusions, I feel the authors provided a general statement regarding the implications of this study. Please provide more specific implications such as what factors should be considered by nursing administrators and clinical nurses?

Answer: What factors should be considered by nursing administrators and clinical nurses was stated accordingly in line 455-461, please check.

#### Strengths and Limitations

1. The second limitation. I don't think this is a limitation. Do the authors have any reference to support that patient satisfaction could change over the weekend than over the weekdays? Please revisit and clarify.

Answer: This statement is somewhat vague, so it has been removed.

2. The third limitation. How can qualitative interviews help in exploring "true thoughts"? Do the authors mean more comprehensive understanding? Please clarify.

Answer: This statement is somewhat vague, so it has been removed.

#### Background

1. The authors' rationale for this study was a lack of studies in the Gansu province. I feel this is not a strong rationale for this study. Please revisit your background and explain how this study is useful for global community. In other words, please justify the international relevance and need for this study, when there are already an ample studies on patient satisfaction.

Answer: The content has been modified in background section accordingly, please check.

2. The authors provided a single definition of patient satisfaction. Please clarify if this definition was adopted for this study and if the definition consistent with that of used in the Newcastle Satisfaction Scale.

Answer: The definition of patient satisfaction has been modified accordingly in line 79-101, please check.

3. Lines 87-90. "From the time of admission, nurses provide care for patients every day without fail until discharge, involve in almost every aspect of patients, therefore they comprise the majority of health care providers." This statement is ambiguous. Please rephrase.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly in line 202-204, please check.

4. Line 95. Please remove the word "Anyway" as it is not used in scholarly writing.

Answer: The word has been removed accordingly, please check.

5. Line 98. "The ratio is 1:0, 426". I don't think this is correct. Please clarify.

Answer: sorry, it should be about 1:0.45, please check.

6. Line 109-110. Please differentiate between A and B class hospitals.

Answer: This statement is somewhat vague, so it has been removed.

7. Line 117. What do the authors mean by unfaithful reports? Please clarify.

Answer: It means the media reported too much negative news about the hospital.

8. I find the background section does not include a better description of the differences in the nursing services between the hospitals in Gansu province and those of other provinces. Please provide more description.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

#### Methods

1. Line 151. "The sample of the study was determined using simple stochastic sampling". Do the authors mean "simple random sampling" rather than stochastic sampling? Please correct.

Answer: The content has been corrected accordingly, please check.

2. It is not clear how a random sample was allocated by the nurse manager when the data was in fact collected by the trained students. Please clarify.

Answer: The content has been clarified accordingly, please check.

3. Please provide more information about the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument.

Did the authors' pilot test the instrument? If so, please provide brief information.

Answer: The data was provided accordingly, please check.

4. Under patient and public involvement, lines 193-194. Please rephrase the statements as these are

vague.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

#### Data Collection

1. Line 201. Please provide a little bit more details about the training of students for data collection. For example, how long the training lasted?

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

2. Line 206. The authors stated that for some patients the data collectors completed the questionnaire. In such cases, please clarify if the data collectors urged the patients to complete the questionnaire?

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

#### Data Analysis

1. The authors stated that the scores were dichotomized. This practice is not recommended anymore due to the loss of information. Also some of the information is already lost due to the use of Likert scale. Please provide a rationale for this dichotomization.

Answer: The dichotomization was following Ahmed's study which evaluated the levels of Adult Patients' Satisfaction with Nursing Care in Selected Public Hospitals in Ethiopia. Do i need to use another way to analyze the data?

#### Results

1. The authors provided titles of two nurses. Junior and Senior. Please explain how this differentiated was reached at. Was it based on the years of experience, qualification or so forth?

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

2. The authors used the data about history of admission. I am not sure what the authors mean by this. As per the inclusion criteria the patients had to be admitted for at least 48 hours which means all of them were admitted to the hospital. Please clarify.

Answer: The content has been explained in data analysis section, please check.

#### Discussion

1. There is a discussion about the general implications of this study, but areas of future research should be highlighted.

Answer: Areas of future research was highlighted in conclusion section, please check.

2. Line 267. "Strengthen rectification". Please clarify what the authors mean by rectification?

Answer: It means formulate corresponding management strategies for the problems.

3. Lines 306-307. "This could be that unmarried patients pay more attention to the impact of diseases on their future life. Therefore, they have relatively more demand for healthcare knowledge, and engaging in treatment decision-making". I feel this statement undermines the importance of health and quality care for the elderly and married people. I am not sure this can be supported with any data. Please provide a reference or rephrase.

Answer: The statement was revised, please check.

4. Lines 340-345. The authors discussed how nurses should be more empathetic and synthetic with the patients. I feel this discussion is not supported by the study findings. Nurses' sympathy, empathy, and compassion are altogether different constructs from nursing care. Also, the Newcastle Satisfaction does not measure nurses' sympathy and empathy. Therefore, I suggest please remove this discussion and focus on other aspects of nursing care that are directly relevant to your findings.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

#### Minor Comments

The manuscript is hampered with grammatical errors and ambiguous terms. Please revisit the whole manuscript and correct the grammatical errors. Some of the examples are:

- Under Abstract, page 2, lines 42-43. The word treatment and respect should be changed to

treated and respected.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

- Under Abstract, page 2, lines 45-46. What do the authors mean by in-charged by junior nurses?

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

- Under Abstract, page 2, lines 48. "Nurses should be more sensitive with the factors"... can be changed to "sensitive to".

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

- Under Background, page 4, line 83. The word golden standard should be gold standard.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

- Under Background, page 4, line 107. "Was carry out national wide" can be changed to was carried out nationwide or at a national level.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

- Under Discussion, page 14, line 263. The spellings of Spain are wrong.

- Under conclusion, line 356. "The word "communicational" should be communication.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

Reviewer: 3

Reviewer Name: Foroozan Atashzadeh-Shoorideh

Institution and Country: School of Nursing & Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared.

Please leave your comments for the authors below

Dear authors

Thank you for submitting the manuscript entitled "Inpatients' satisfaction with nursing care at a tertiary hospital in Gansu, China: a cross-sectional study" to this journal. There are some challenges regarding the manuscript as follows:

Abstract

The aim of this study was "to examine the level of patient satisfaction with nursing care and identify the factors affecting satisfaction from the in-patients' viewpoints", while it is different from the title of this manuscript.

Answer: The title has been modified according aim of this study, please check.

Introduction

The description and explanation of violence in Chinese nurses is not consistent with the title of this research. So, the lines 119-24 must be omitted. The necessary of this study is missed. Thus, the introduction must develop and current challenge about research variables must well explain.

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

Detailed literature review helps the readers to study about past studies about these variables. This section needs development, too. On the other hand, the second aim of this study is "to investigate the influence factors affecting patient satisfaction with nursing care" however there was not any explanation about this challenge in the introduction section".

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly, please check.

Research hypothesis and model of study clearly described. But, hypothesis did not demonstrated in the model. The model is a little ambiguous.

Method

The authors wrote "Patients were excluded on any one of the following conditions: critical illness or cognitive impairment that affects judgement; inability to provide written informed consent." They are not exclusion criteria. In my opinion, these patients must not be selected for this research. In



exclusion criteria, the participants enter the research and in the study time exclude based on any reasons. Is there any cut off point for instruments. Which method used for validity and reliability for instruments?

Answer: The content has been modified accordingly. The method used for validity and reliability for instruments was described in instrument section, please check.

## VERSION 2 – REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	alvisa palese Udine University, Italy
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	24-Dec-2019

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>I appreciated the changes and improvements made in the body of the manuscript. I have the following suggestions</p> <p>a. In the introduction/background, there is a need to be more concise: I suggest the following changes: regarding the main concept and the general issues, you can leave the first section as it is. Then, after having introduced the research gap/question, to summarise the main evidence available on your region in the following manner: indicate in a table, in a consistent order (by the strength of the study design, or by year) all studies available by reporting for each the study design, the hospital included, the participants, the instrument and the satisfaction (in number and %). I give you an example: 'A survey in 71 Chinese hospitals showed 139 patient satisfaction in 80% of the hospitals to be more than 90%.<sup>22</sup> In the following sentence it has been reported: 'In other hospitals 140 78% of patients were satisfied.<sup>23</sup> In this second sentence it has been not reported the number of hospitals, the participants and so on. Moreover, by presenting these available evidences in a table, the manuscript can be more concise</p> <p>b. Study design; please include the year of data collection s well as report a guideline (e.g. Strone for cross sectional study design) used to report the methods and the findings</p> <p>c. Setting and participants contains data also regarding the data collection process. Please revise. Moreover, remove the trained students, who are reported later also in the data collection process</p> <p>d. Please reorganise the table, there are missed space, and too much space in some columns. I suggest an in depth editing of it. Moreover as it has been presented, the significant differences have been missed. Without reporting values, the table is not clear: for example, why the score has been calculated for male and female, if the difference has not been tested? Furthermore, not all acronyms have been explained in the end of the table (e.g., RN)</p> <p>e. Please, near the Scores of the tool, sue the maximin range to help the reader to understand the meaning of the value. Example: 'the average satisfaction score of patients is <math>78.15 \pm 4.74</math>.' include after 78.15 the maximin value of the tool (out of 96) just to give a reference point</p> <p>f. Also in the Table 2 the acronym has not been explained (see the title of the table). Similar in the following.</p> <p>g. In the discussion, please compare data only with similar countries in terms of development and with studies using similar tool. In this light the table suggested in the introduction, can be important.</p> <p>h. Discussions should be limited to the aims of the study – therefore I suggest to shorten them</p> <p>i. I encourage the authors to consider the abovementioned suggestions in order to improve their manuscript. I also suggest to</p>
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	remove the figure (Histograms) and to check again the references which are not consistent and homogeneous according to the journal rules
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Ahtisham Younas Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	11-Dec-2019

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Thank you for your revisions. Most of my comments are addressed and the manuscript is much improved. Regarding dichotomization of scores, I would have analyzed the satisfaction scores with respect to demographic data with a each point on the Likert scale using chi-square, and reported the no opinion" in narrative summary. However, since the authors have justified their reasons, I have no further comments on this issue. I do have a very minor comment about the abstract. Please revise the conclusion in the abstract because some extra words can be removed. For example, "in this study in comparison to many studies" can be removed. A simple statement "The overall level of patient satisfaction was moderate." is suffice and the authors can provide the mean level of satisfaction.</p>
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Foroozan Atashzadeh-Shoorideh Department of psychiatric Nursing and Management, School of Nursing & Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	09-Jan-2020

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Thank you for submitting the manuscript entitled "Inpatients' satisfaction with nursing care in the backward region: a cross-sectional study from Northwestern China" to this journal. There are some challenges regarding the manuscript as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, what is the meaning of backward region, which is not definite/describe in the content of manuscript.</li> <li>2. In the introduction, some of sentences and paragraphs are separate and do not relationship with together. I suggest to revise the contents and to provide a better presentation of the available literature in Asian countries. For example, I appreciate the mention of the study performed in some countries but there are several cross-countries studies performed to date thus I suggest to increase this section.</li> <li>3. There are inconsistencies in some section of the study: for example, in the introduction section, you reported that Patient satisfaction with nursing service is an important component of patient satisfaction, and there is no consistent definition at present. However, later you reported that patients' satisfaction with nursing is a subjective feeling, which is closely related to their expectation and perception of nursing quality. If it is not a consistent definition, how did you do the research?</li> <li>4. The aim of the study was to examine the level of patient satisfaction with nursing care and identify the factors affecting satisfaction from the in-patients' viewpoints in backward region of China. However, the authors did not mention what are these factors in the literature review. What was the reason for examining the factors affecting job satisfaction? Please clarify it.</li> </ol>
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	<p>5. The presentation of the total scores of satisfaction should be reported at the end of the table 2, not in table 3.</p> <p>6. In discussion section, I suggest you use the studies have been done in Asian countries, which the contexts of them much like China. However, you have mentioned the studies in Europe!</p> <p>Moreover, there are several typos mistakes, grammar mistakes and ambiguous terms. Please revisit the whole manuscript and correct the grammatical errors.</p> <p>The study was conducted at a tertiary hospital located in the Northwest of China, which is not generalizing to other setting. In other words, this manuscript does not add anything to the current knowledge. I recommend submit this manuscript in a national journal.</p> <p>Hope the above comments help you to develop the manuscript.</p>
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### VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer #1:

Please revise the conclusion in the abstract because some extra words can be removed. For example, "in this study in comparison to many studies" can be removed. A simple statement "The overall level of patient satisfaction was moderate." is suffice and the authors can provide the mean level of satisfaction.

Answer: We removed the sentence "in this study in comparison to many studies" in accordance with reviewer 1, and the mean level of satisfaction was showed in results section, please check.

Reviewer #2:

a. In the introduction/background, there is a need to be more concise: I suggest the following changes: regarding the main concept and the general issues, you can leave the first section as it is. Then, after having introduced the research gap/question, to summarise the main evidence available on your region in the following manner: indicate in a table, in a consistent order (by the strength of the study design, or by year) all studies available by reporting for each the study design, the hospital included, the participants, the instrument and the satisfaction (in number and %). I give you an example: 'A survey in 71 Chinese hospitals showed 139 patient satisfaction in 80% of the hospitals to be more than 90%.<sup>22</sup> In the following sentence it has been reported: 'In other hospitals 140 78% of patients were satisfied.<sup>23</sup> In this second sentence it has been not reported the number of hospitals, the participants and so on. Moreover, by presenting these available evidences in a table, the manuscript can be more concise

Answer: the main evidence available on our region were indicated in table 1 as commenced, please check.

b. Study design; please include the year of data collection s well as report a guideline (e.g. Strone for cross sectional study design) used to report the methods and the findings

Answer: The year of data collection was described, and a reporting guideline was also introduced in

study design section line 202-204.

c. Setting and participants contains data also regarding the data collection process. Please revise. Moreover, remove the trained students, who are reported later also in the data collection process

Answer: The trained students were removed from setting and participants section, and data collection process contained in setting and participants section were revised as comments, please check.

d. Please reorganise the table, there are missed space, and too much space in some columns. I suggest an in depth editing of it. Moreover as it has been presented, the significant differences have been missed. Without reporting values, the table is not clear: for example, why the score has been calculated for male and female, if the difference has not been tested? Furthermore, not all acronyms have been explained in the end of the table (e.g., RN)

Answer: Thanks for comment, we removed the missed space in table 4; the difference between male and female has been tested in table 5; and all acronyms have been explained in the end of the table, please check.

e. Please, near the Scores of the tool, use the maximum range to help the reader to understand the meaning of the value. Example: 'the average satisfaction score of patients is  $78.15 \pm 4.74$ .' include after 78.15 the maximum value of the tool (out of 96) just to give a reference point.

Answer: The maximum range was included after 78.15 in table 1, please check.

f. Also in the Table 2 the acronym has not been explained (see the title of the table). Similar in the following.

Answer: The acronym GPH has been explained in the bottom of table 2, please check.

g. In the discussion, please compare data only with similar countries in terms of development and with studies using similar tool. In this light the table suggested in the introduction, can be important.

Answer: The data with similar countries and using similar tool were used accordingly in discussion section, please check.

h. Discussions should be limited to the aims of the study – therefore I suggest to shorten them.

Answer: Discussions were limited to the aims of the study and shortened accordingly, please check.

i. I encourage the authors to consider the above mentioned suggestions in order to improve their manuscript. I also suggest to remove the figure (Histograms) and to check again the references which are not consistent and homogeneous according to the journal rules.

Answer: The mentioned suggestions were considered in order, the figure (Histograms) was removed and the references were revised according to the journal rules, please check.

Reviewer #3:

1. First, what is the meaning of backward region, which is not defined/described in the content of manuscript.

Answer: We described Gansu Province as backward region as "Gansu province is located in north-west of China. Affected by region, the development of economy, culture and information is relatively backward. According to China's economic comprehensive competitiveness development report,

Gansu province ranks 27th among the 31 provinces in China". This was described in line 191-194, please check.

2. In the introduction, some of sentences and paragraphs are separate and do not relationship with together. I suggest to revise the contents and to provide a better presentation of the available literature in Asian countries. For example, I appreciate the mention of the study performed in some countries but there are several cross-countries studies performed to date thus I suggest to increase this section.

Answer: We revised the contents of introduction and used a table to present the available literature in Asian countries, please check.

3. There are inconsistencies in some section of the study: for example, in the introduction section, you reported that Patient satisfaction with nursing service is an important component of patient satisfaction, and there is no consistent definition at present. However, later you reported that patients' satisfaction with nursing is a subjective feeling, which is closely related to their expectation and perception of nursing quality. If it is not a consistent definition, how did you do the research?

Answer: Sorry to make the inconsistencies, we revised the contents of patient satisfaction with nursing in second paragraph, please check.

4. The aim of the study was to examine the level of patient satisfaction with nursing care and identify the factors affecting satisfaction from the in-patients' viewpoints in backward region of China. However, the authors did not mention what are these factors in the literature review. What was the reason for examining the factors affecting job satisfaction? Please clarify it.

Answer: The literature and the reason why to examine the factors affecting job satisfaction was described in the forth paragraph in background section, please check.

5. The presentation of the total scores of satisfaction should be reported at the end of the table 2, not in table 3.

Answer: Dear reviewer, in our study, we use mean satisfaction score as a cut point to dichotomise satisfaction into 'satisfied' and 'not satisfied', so the total scores of satisfaction should be the result showed at the end of table 4, please check.

6. In discussion section, I suggest you use the studies have been done in Asian countries, which the contexts of them much like China. However, you have mentioned the studies in Europe!

Answer: The literature in Asian countries have been used in discussion section, please check.