

**NURSING RESEARCH REVIEW FORM**

1st Review

Manuscript # 2004/090  
Manuscript title: Efficacy of theory-based activities for behavioral symptoms of dementia  
Manuscript type: Regular  
Number of text pgs.: 16  
Number of figures: 2  
Number of tables: 2  
Reviewer: Cynthia S. Teel  
Stat reviewer assigned?: No -- do you recommend a stat reviewer?

**Please evaluate the following with these choices: (1) adequate, (2) inadequate (describe in written review) or (3) not appropriate (describe in written review)**

Problem statement: 1  
Attention to relevant literature: 1  
Theoretical framework: 2  
Research design: 1  
Data analysis: 1  
Discussion of results: 2, with respect to theoretical framework  
Organization: 1  
Writing style: 1

**Please rate the following topics 1-5 (with 5 being the highest rating):**

Value of topic: 4  
Probable reader interest in topic: 3  
Importance of present contribution to nursing: 4  
Priority of topic for publication: 4  
Rank this manuscript for its value: 4

**Reviewer's Recommendation (please type "X" after your choice):**

Accept without revisions  
Accept with revisions X  
Maybe accept with revisions  
Do not accept

**Comments for Editor only:**

**Please provide a comprehensive and integrated review of this manuscript.  
Be sure to present a balanced view of the manuscript's strengths and weaknesses.**

The manuscript is a report of findings from testing theory-derived, recreational activities for persons with dementia in a long-term care setting. Subjects participated in activities matched to skill, style of interest, and skill & interest. Engagement, affect, mood, and behavioral symptoms were assessed following each treatment condition. The paper provides an interesting example of using theory as a guide for research, and projections about possible use of theory in practice - to help “target treatments effectively”.

**Problem Statement:** Behavioral symptoms among nursing home residents with dementia are virtually universal. Non-pharmacological approaches to respond to symptoms are needed, yet few theory-based interventions have been tested.

**Literature Review:** Literature review is brief, but includes most of the major citations in this area.

**Theoretical Framework:** The NDB model provides a basis for the selection of activities and outcome variables. The selected activities are proposed to match the person’s cognitive and physical ability and skills. In identifying a framework for the intervention, and a lens by which to interpret the findings, this element of the manuscript is one of the most important.

The figures representing the NDB Model and the Causal Model need careful revision to enhance clarity of the interrelationships among the concepts. For example, the background and proximal factors are shown as independent contributors to behavioral symptoms in the NDB model, although the text indicates that symptoms “reflect the interaction of” background and proximal factors. In the Causal Model (which also requires a different, more explanatory title), the background factors are shown as preceding the proximal factors, yet the notation indicates that the background factors “responds to” the proximal factors, which seems to indicate a relationship in the opposite direction. Regardless of direction, the interrelationship is clear, yet appears not to have been indicated in the figure representing the original model, and requires discussion in the text. From a theoretical perspective, the person is embedded in a context, and decisions about recreational activities would seem to be made after assessment of the background and proximal factors. This approach is described in the text, with regard to how activities are matched to skill and interest. In light of this approach, it seems inconsistent to illustrate activity as preceding all other factors. Regarding format, the double-bullet notation and the use of boxes need to be revised.

Overall, the discussion about the NDB Model and exactly how it is used to guide selection of the activities tested in this study, discussion about results of the hypothesis testing articulated on pages 5 & 6, and how the findings relate to suggestions for modification of the NDB model and the proposed Causal Model (or not), are cursory and require elaboration.

**Design & Analysis:** A crossover experimental design with repeated measures of the dependent variables was used for this study. The order of the 3 conditions was randomized and 5 subjects participated in each of the 6 condition-order groups. The design and analysis are appropriate for the study. Table 2 includes the means for the DVs by treatment condition, but could be made more useful by also including notations regarding the significance of differences across conditions.

According to page 8, the data that were collected about physical functioning, cognitive ability, and style of interest were used for activity prescription, yet this process is not explained; an explanation of how the data were used to guide decisions about the activities should be included.

**Organization & Presentation:** Overall, the manuscript is well-written. The ideas are presented clearly. The findings are interesting and hold promise for future theory development and use of theory to guide practice decisions.