Reviewer’s report

Title: The use of pure and impure placebo interventions in primary care: a qualitative approach

Version: 2 Date: 6 January 2011

Reviewer: evan Cherniack

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General Comment

I am pleased to see that the manuscript has been improved, but there is still more work that needs to be done before I believe the manuscript is ready for publication.

Specific Comments

Abstract conclusion: Still need to clarify the meaning of “partly unaware” in the first sentence and last sentence of the discussion (e.g., what does “self-concept” mean”?)

Background: Sentence 2: See my original comments on this statement when it was in the background section of the abstract.
Sentence 3: See my original comments on this statement
Sentence 7: Substitute “In order to assess” for “For assessing”
Sentence 8: delete, it reiterates sentence 7.

Methods: Analysis: sentence 7: What does “Minor differences of opinion were discussed to resolve” mean? This sentence needs to be changed to be coherent. Did the coders discuss their analyses with each other to reach common agreement on coding?

Ethic approval: Add an “s” to the word “Ethic”

Sentence 2: delete “and data from the…”, you already stated the in the analysis that the interviews were anonymous.

Results:
Theme 1: sentence 1: Change “We defined “definition of placebo” as the physician’s…” to “We asked physicians to state in their own words their definition of placebo and placebo effect, their attitudes towards placebos, and explain how they might work.”
Sentence 6: what does the word “profit” mean? Benefit? Replace this word.
What is the difference between Theme 2 and Theme 3 (other than the inclusion of CAM in 3)? This should be clarified.
Theme 5: Sentence 1: Replace this sentence with: “Physicians were asked their opinion as to whether they believed guidelines on placebo use would be helpful.”

Sentence 5: I don’t understand what this sentence means. Please rewrite. Do you mean that physicians belief that the presence of guidelines implies a lack of integrity?

Discussion:

Since the section is now organized according to the “themes”, add the subheading “Definition” before the first paragraph.

Sentence 1: I would suggest replacing “mostly” with “often”.

Experiences and awareness: see my comments in the original review.

Placebo use in daily practice:

Sentence 1: substitute “according to the nature of the illness” for “regarding the character of the disease”.

CAM as placebo treatment:

Sentence 2: Substitute: “Most (or all) physicians agreed that” for “With a high accordance”

Sentence 4: substitute “weak” for “week”

Sentence 5: add an “s” to the word “placebo” after the word “similar”

Sentence 6: add an “s” to the word “observation”

Limitations:

Sentence 5: Substitute “may bias physicians influencing the way PCPs describe the role of placebos in their daily practice” for “may have been imposed upon…it influences their daily practice”

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.