Reviewer's report

Title: Reiki and related therapies in the dialysis ward: are these Complementary and Alternative Medicines to be welcomed or banned? An evidence-based and ethical discussion.

Version: 1 Date: 7 November 2012

Reviewer: Katherine Wachmann

Reviewer's report:

This paper raises an interesting point for discussion by putting Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) approaches, in particular Reiki for pain relief in the dialysis ward, into a larger ethical context about efficacy, treatment side effects, cost and availability, possibility for easy integration into mainstream therapies and patient's autonomy. The authors analyze the classic evidence-based approach for choosing Reiki as a pain reliever in the dialysis ward versus a more ethical framework as a basis for decision. Although the debate addresses an important problem of interest to the biomedical audience, I do have some comments and suggestions for the authors.

-Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Please add a Methods section explaining how the analysis was performed.
2. The last paragraph in the Discussion section that starts with “The principle of beneficence…” really includes the main conclusion of the paper and should be more fully developed.

-Minor Essential Revisions
1. Figure 1, with the internet searches, is not essential for the main point of the paper, I suggest removing it.
2. Define and explain the term EBM (evidence-based medicine)
3. The authors mention in the Discussion section in a paragraph with the title “The classic EBM approach, based upon treatment efficacy underlines the limited evidence on Reiki and related CAMs and the low-grade effect on pain.” that only one paper dealt with efficacy studies in dialysis patients specifically. Please include the findings and recommendations of that paper in the text.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests