Reviewer’s report

Title: Determinants of public trust in complementary and alternative medicine

Version: 1 Date: 14 October 2009

Reviewer: Aslak Steinsbekk

Reviewer’s report:

This is a good article from a well conceived study. Investigating trust helps broaden the understanding of CAM use.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

As the authors also discuss, exposure to a health care service is likely to increase trust. As the vast majority of the population has used conventional health care, the actually report on something they have at least some experience with. Therefore I was expecting more emphasise on comparing trust among those who had and not had used CAM. This could e.g. by including new columns in table 1 and 3 for those having used and those not having used CAM and the result section in the abstract and the conclusion should include both the general trust (5) and also the trust among users.

Would it be correct to include use of Cam as a variable to control for in the regression analysis?

The text could benefit from being more precise about this being a study about the participants’ perception. I.e. use words like “perceived” and “reported”.

The exact text in the question on CAM use should be given, especially to discern whether it is visit to CAM practitioners or also self treatment with CAM product/practices and for which time period it was asked (ever, last year?). The text in the article should be revised to be precise about this. My guess is that it is about visit to practitioners (re the listing of providers) and if this was the case, the text should include “visits to” instead on “use of”.

As acknowledged by the authors, religious and political views are rather dubious proxies for Philosophy of life. I understand the choice of word, but find it more correct to use a term like “religious and political view”.

Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

As no numbers is given in the tables, were there no missing one the different
questions or are missing coded as “No information”

In general I find it more correct to report the actual p-value. Therefore consider to include it as a column in table 3.

Legend on fig 1 should include the text of the endpoints: 0 (no trust) and 10 (complete trust)

Discretionary Revisions
These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

The title could include “in the Netherlands”

In the Background section in the abstract it seems more logical to have the aim before the hypothesis – as it is in the article.

Hypothesis under “1. Inst..”. I did not understand at first what types of institutional guarantees were meant. Could something be added to point to the types of questions asked?

The abstract and result section should state clearly the proportion who have used CAM.

The text in the first paragraph in Data analysis should be moved to the actual variables to make it easier to follow what was done.

The last paragraph under Inst. in Result section. The 28% should be 84% to “match” the 50 to 60%?

Under Network, res sect: I think it is wrong to use “minority” on 44% of a population – either omit or

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interest