Reviewer's report

Title: Nutritional supplements for diabetes sold on the internet: business or health promotion?

Version: 1 Date: 15 May 2013

Reviewer: Miguel Angel Mayer

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The paper describes the characteristics and content of websites with information about nutritional supplements and those that are promoting the sale of these products and above all, websites that are focused on specific information addressed to diabetes type 2 patients. Internet is a very common means used to promote different kinds of products related to health and nutritional supplements and medications are among them frequently. For that reason this paper can be considered a relevant and interesting study.

Major compulsory revisions.

In the abstract it is mentioned that there are many medications available for the treatment and prevention of diabetes and many people turn to nutritional supplements. In the introduction it is not wholly clear when or why the use of NS is inadequate or not, because in fact it should be mentioned that diet counselling and treatment is a key element in the monitoring and treatment of patients with diabetes type 2, so it is very important to define what “nutritional supplements” are and to determine whether this “turn to” of many patients that the authors mentioned is appropriate or not.

It is not clear if finally the study was focused on all types of diabetes (in the discussion section and results) or diabetes type 2 as is mentioned in the background section in the abstract (take note about the keywords used to perform the search) and in the introduction.

It is not clear how the final number of websites was selected because it is mentioned that there were 28 websites that fitted the inclusion criteria, with 12 of these mentioned in more than one search engine (28-12=16), but “only 10 sites suited” the study purpose. Please mention in the text (not only in the general diagram figure) what happened with the 4 remaining websites that were excluded. It seems no websites from Yahoo! results were included, please specify the reasons.

In the results section the authors mentioned “the first web search”, so do the authors mean there were more web searches? Please clarify.

Another limitation that should be mentioned is the fact that the websites analysed were only in English. Another very important issue is that there are a lot of websites selling products without any kind of information about the ingredients of
NS, which were neither mentioned nor analysed in terms of quality.

It is advisable to avoid the use of the term “unhealthy people” in reference to people with any kind of illness or condition (in contrast to “health people” terminology), it is better to use the expression “people suffering from some kind of health condition” and in fact this statement is not clear because in the introduction it is mentioned that this kind of product is acquired above all by healthy people. On the other hand, it is not clear that the “easy access to NSs lacking…” is a public health concern, in any case it is supposed can be a health problem (the paper don't analyse this matter) and should be a public health concern.

The main conclusion is related to the fact that it seems that NSs websites have a lack of adequate medical information and strong scientific evidence, and this is not clearly included.

The format of some references should be reviewed (for instance, 2, 17, 20, 33, 37).

**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 interests.