Reviewer's report

Title: What the newspapers say about medication adherence: a content analysis

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Reviewer: Ian Watt

Reviewer's report:

This paper reports on a content analysis of newspaper articles which sought to investigate coverage of adherence to medicine by the newsprint media. It was a clearly written report which addresses an interesting question.

My comments are bullet pointed below:

Major:

It is mentioned that judgements were made during data extraction on "article slant" and "quality of information", however no details are given of how judgements of quality were made or what constituted a positive or negative slant.

Apart from the above major concern, I have a number of minor points to make which the editors/authors may wish to consider.

* I think the authors overstate the case in the introduction for the importance of medication adherence when they state it is the "single most important health intervention likely to improve the health of the population".

* We are told the content analysis looked at articles published between 2004 and 2011 - is there any justification for these dates?

* In the results it is stated that the proportion of each article that dealt specifically with the topic of adherence was low and this statement we are told is based on a word count but I am unclear as to how the word count was calculated.

* In the discussion it is stated that the study demonstrates that the medical literature is not strongly influencing newspaper reporting on adherence. This may or may not be true but I don't believe the study provides conclusive evidence either way, for example, given the competing demands for coverage in the general news media it could be argued that the current level of coverage is actually quite good and that the medical literature influential.

* In the limitations section further detail is given on articles from the LA Times and Wall Street Journal. I feel this would be better placed at the outset in the methods section.

* It would be helpful to have some discussion in the study limitations of the sensitivity of the search terms used.
**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 declare that I have no competing interests