Reviewer’s report

Title: The German Fibromyalgia Consumer Reports - A cross-sectional survey

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Reviewer: Juan V. Luciano

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This is a clearly-written and succinct article whose main aim is to report the first European fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) consumer reports on the effectiveness and side effects of FMS-therapies. From my point of view, although the objective of the paper is not ambitious, it might be interesting for European clinicians and researchers that are involved in the study of FMS. The following issues should be addressed by the authors before this paper would be publishable by BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders:

Background (page 3)
The background is well developed, the length is adequate, it includes recent and relevant studies, and the topic addressed is clearly presented to the reader.

Minor essential revision: Reference number 1 and number 7 is identical. Please, correct this mistake.

Discretionary revision: When the authors say “Evidence-based guidelines aim to guide patients and health care providers in the choice of treatment options (11-13)”, they might have cited the following review: Häuser W, Thieme K, Turk DC. Guidelines on the management of fibromyalgia syndrome – A systematic review. Eur J Pain 2010; 14: 5-10.

Methods (pages 3-5)
The study procedure is well exposed and seems correct. I only suggest a minor essential revision:

When the authors say “Participants of the study were recruited by the two largest German FMS-self help organizations and nine clinical institutions. The specialties of the clinical institutions were pain medicine and psychotherapy (3), rheumatology (2), complementary and alternative medicine (2), physical therapy (1) and pain therapy (1). The settings were outpatient (6), inpatient (2) and day clinic (1). The levels of care were secondary (6) and tertiary care (2) and rehabilitation (1)”, they should have put an “n=” before the numbers, otherwise they seem references at first glance.

Results (pages 5-6)
“There were no data available about how many patients contacted by the self-help organization refused to take part in the study.” This is a serious methodological shortcoming. It is very important to know the response rate in surveys because is an indicator of the generalizability of the results.
Discussion and Conclusions (pages 6-7)
Overall, the conclusions are supported by the data and the limitations are clearly stated.

Minor essential revision: In the section Comparison with other studies, the authors say “NFA-Studie”. Please, correct this mistake.

Discretionary revision: The authors might comment on that patients’ opinions are in line with recent meta-analyses concerning the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions for FMS (e.g. Häuser W, Bernardy K, Arnold B, Offenbächer M, Schiltenwolf M. Efficacy of multicomponent treatment in fibromyalgia syndrome: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled clinical trials. Arthritis Rheum 2009; 61: 216-224).

**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