Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative investigation of the impact of peer to peer online support for women living with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Version: 1 Date: 6 August 2013

Reviewer: Jeong Yeob Han

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

One of the major drawbacks of this paper is that it does not utilize any theory or theorizing – the purpose seems purely descriptive. The front section of the study would benefit from provision of the overall theoretical framework of the study and more literature reviews on both online forums and computer-mediated communication. Some allusion to theory and background research would significantly enhance the credibility and value of this piece.

The literature review seems to be outdated since much relevant research is available even in early 2010. This is especially true for the health-related online support group and its potential benefits. Please expand it and include more recent literature around the topic discussed in the manuscript.

P. 6. Analysis section. It would be helpful for authors to provide more information regarding the thematic analysis (how it is conducted, how it is different from quantitative content analysis, including the advantage and disadvantage etc.) and also the initial result of an inductive analysis, which eventually leads to your selection of final themes. That way, readers could see what themes have been emerged (and not emerged) and also what themes are more (vs. less) popular.

The result section is overall poorly written compared to other section of the manuscript. I think the major issue is that it is not tied to previous literature even though all five themes have been well studied and established from past studies. Another issue is that it focuses too much on describing example texts but the authors’ interpretation and analysis is minimally conducted.

Minor Essential Revisions:

P. 5. The authors argue that “it was not possible to randomly select which users the emails would be sent to,” but it can be done easily as long as the authors have a list of email addresses (for example, simple random sampling). Additional clarification is needed to justify your approach.

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'