Reviewer's report

Title: Use of complementary and alternative medicine by those with a chronic disease and the general population - results of a national population based survey

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Reviewer: Marek Brabec

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This is a nice paper about interesting and novel aspect of medical care. As the authors state clearly, it is obvious that the mainstream health care should be prepared for more and more widespread use of alternative medicine for various reasons of substantial practical importance. To this end, getting reliable data about the complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use is the logical first step. The paper analyzes one rich and appropriate data source using relatively simple but properly used and properly interpreted suite of statistical techniques (on the other hand, the design of the underlying survey sampling study is complex). Conclusions are well supported by the data, free from overstatements and exaggerations. Statistical terminology is used in appropriate way (unlike in many other papers from similar fields). The findings are interesting from both theoretical and practical viewpoints. Further, the paper is nicely written, it reads well and it should be published.

Here is a minor suggestion, motivated mainly by my own curiosity. On Page 17, there appears a statement “individuals who are not currently married or in a common law relationship are more likely to have used CAM services than those with a live-in partner”. That is certainly interesting and motivates various possible explanations. Given the fact that women tend to use the CAM more frequently (as reported earlier in the paper), one might want to explore the partnership status influence more thoroughly. Is it a woman who drives the use of CAM for men in a partnership? Or, is the increase in CAM use between single and in-partnership individuals similar between men group and women group? Nice thing is that this type of questions can be easily answered with the data the authors have already.