Reviewer's report

Title: The prevalence and experience of Australian naturopaths and Western herbalists working within community pharmacies

Version: 1 Date: 22 November 2010

Reviewer: Yuri Clement

Reviewer's report:

Overview:
This descriptive on-line survey of 479 naturopaths and Western herbalists assessed the experience of these practitioners and their interactions with pharmacists. A major finding was that only 24% of respondents had prior exposure to working within the community pharmacy environment and for the most part their recall of interactions with pharmacists was fairly positive. However, at the time of the survey just 11% of respondents were either working at community pharmacies or alongside medical practitioners at multidisciplinary clinics.

General comments:
The study concept is novel, in that the authors examined the concept of ‘integrative medicine’ from the viewpoint of CAM practitioners in the biomedicine environment of pharmacy practice. This approach could identify factors, such as lack of knowledge, that hinder the integration of evidence-based CAM into mainstream medicine.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS: None

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS:

Methods
1. The authors could include selected items of the survey instrument in this section, especially attitudinal questions.
2. Examples of multiple choice questions (are these knowledge based?), open-ended and items requiring Likert-scale responses could also be given.

Discussion
This section is generally well written. However, the authors should temper their discussion to reflect the serious limitations of the survey, primarily the self-selection bias of respondents. This could heavily skew the responses regarding practitioners experiences and attitudes toward CAM-biomedicine integration. Also, just 24% of respondents currently or previously worked in pharmacies, so the discussion should not generalize to the wider ‘integrative’ process, which would have included practitioners who did not participate in the survey.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'