Reviewer's report

Title: Alternative Health Care Consultations in Ontario, Canada: A Socio-Demographic and Geographic Analysis

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Reviewer: Aslak Steinsbekk

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The size of the study makes it an interesting addition to the literature. I like the analysis (tab 5, 6) of comparing users of one modality to users of the other modalities, but this should be made more explicit (see below).

As the aim of this is a study about association between CAM use and socio-dem/geographic variables and the main results are the ones derived from the logistic regression, the main conclusion should be that geographic characteristics do not have an influence while some of the socio-dem have.

The above point is an indication of a general issue, that the analysis and results are not clearly presented with respect to which issues that is given prominence and the logic of the "build up". It was very difficult to get an overview of the different ways the analyses was done and the results presented, specially due to changing what the reference was (e.g. tab 2 with first line giving proportion of CAM visitors in population and the rest being proportion of CAM visitors, and tab 5 where first part is cam visitors vs total population and second part is visitors to one modality vs all other CAM visitors (did this include the modalities not presented like relaxation etc?)! The description of the analyses in methods and the presentations of the results could therefore be restructured to adhere to the analysis done in the logistic regression:

1) A bivariate analysis of all the variables in the model (expanding table 4 and integrate with data from fig 2-6, might also integrate it with part of table 2),
   a. comparing CAM visitors to the general population
   b. comparing each CAM modality to the other CAM modalities
2) the map, i.e. the geographical distribution. Omit table 3 or integrate it into the above bivariate table, to include both seems to much given the non significance of this variable.
3) A logistic regression as now, but make a more explicit division between the comparison of CAM visitors vs whole population (first part of tab 5, make this the only analyses in tab 5) and the comparison "within" the CAM modalities (second part of tab 5 and tab 6, combine these into table 6). I do think it would be possible integrate this into one table
4) The post hoc analysis (at least it seems to be a post hoc analysis) of women / chronic condition / un/met health care needs is OK but should be described in the methods section and a rationale should be given.
I don't see the value of so many figures as the geographic almost have no association with CAM visits, i.e. delete.

Another major point is the length of the article. Too much text is written about things that can be found in the tables. Things written in the methods section is repeated in the result section. And too many figures, different types of tables.

Abstract. In background, the second sentence is from the results. Rewrite methods to make more explicit the main analyses done (although it is correct that three types are examined, it does not give the reader any information on how, especially not that the main analysis (log reg) is comparing these modalities.). Conclusion should be more explicit, stating the answer to the aim (no association with geographic variables but ass with sociodem).

The legend of especially the tables is not instructive enough. E.g. the same wording is used for both tab 5 and 6.

**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