Reviewer's report

**Title:** Meaning and Challenges in the Practice of Multiple Therapeutic Massage Modalities: A Combined Methods Study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 24 June 2011

**Reviewer:** Ava Lorenc

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major compulsory revisions:**
1. Overall this is a well designed and reported study, but I found it of limited interest. The main reason is that there is little comparison with other therapies which are perhaps in a similar situation, such as other CAM, physiotherapy or surgery, or even conventional medicine.
2. This study would have a lot more meaning if there was a discussion of the local regulation, qualifications, validated courses as these will vary hugely between countries/areas, and the results mean nothing without this information.

**Minor Essential revisions:**
2. In the Background I am unclear about the sentence "a review of published TMB research..." - the references given aren't for research studies, does this sentence refer to a review of reviews?
3. It would be good to know why the return rate was so much higher from the NHPC than other organisations as this is likely to have skewed the results.
4. Discussion, page 21 I am unclear what "provide links" means regarding associations and training organisations.
5. You could refer to STRICTA which includes practitioner training as a criteria for good reporting of research.
6. The discussion of protocols (page 21) is interesting, but could be expanded on e.g. by reference to acupuncture.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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'