Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence and Determinants of Complementary and Alternative Medicine use among Infertile Patients in Lebanon: a cross sectional study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Rowles,

First we would like to thank you for giving us the chance to resubmit our manuscript to your respectable journal. This version of the manuscript was modified as per the journal reviewers’ comments and suggestions. We believe that these modifications have enhanced the scientific rigor of the manuscript as well as its clarity and presentation to the reader.

We include below a detailed response to each of the reviewer comments/suggestions in italics followed by our response. Specific references to alterations in the text of the manuscript are also noted.

Reviewer #1

Abstract,
1. results part: "Female sex is negatively associated with CAM use" is confounding, please rewrite it comparing to male sex; (Males use more CAM than females?)
The older the patients...

- Author’s response: As indicated by the reviewer, the sentence referring to the association between sex and CAM use has been revised to read as follows “with females using less CAM than males (OR: 0.12, 95% CI: 0.051-0.278).

2. conclusions part: We don’t know how much knowledge the physicians in Lebanon have about CAM, so, we may not be able to conclude that there is a need of education. In addition, the majority of patients did not report any side-effects (Table 2), so, why to enhance awareness of safe use? please, rewrite the conclusions part in the abstract regarding to your findings in the study.

- Author’s response: The conclusion section was rewritten according to the reviewer suggestion reflecting mainly the findings of this study “Patterns of CAM use in the surveyed sample was considerably high. Despite this high prevalence, the reporting of CAM use by patients to their physicians was low. Age, sex and socioeconomic status of patients were factors associated with the CAM use among Lebanese infertile patients.”
3. Discussion: Although patients were described to come from all over the country, we still cannot say that this study is resembling all patients in Lebanon; instead, “in an ART unit in Beirut.”

- **Author’s response:** We thank the reviewer for his comment and the text has been revised to better describe the surveyed population: “This study investigated the prevalence and determinants of CAM use among infertile patients attending the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Unit at the American University of Beirut Medical Center, a major tertiary hospital in Beirut, Lebanon” (page 12, lines 1-4)

4. p.15, second paragraph: the explanation why older age decreases CAM use is unsatisfactory; and contradictionary with the first phrase; please, simply delete this factor, there may be no clear cause for this result.

- **Author’s response:** As per the reviewer’s recommendation, the discussion regarding age at diagnosis and CAM use was deleted (page 15, lines 8-11)

5. What do you mean with spiritual therapy? Please, explain or change.

- **Author’s response:** In this manuscript spiritual therapy refers to any religious related activity practiced to improve fertility. A sentence clarifying the meaning of “spiritual therapy” was added to the results section. (page 9, lines 18-19)

6. Again, in the last paragraph, results from this study do not show that CAM education, training health workers or awareness of patients will improve anything; instead, you may say that research is necessary on these issues.

- **Author’s response:** The conclusion section has been revised according to the reviewer’s comment to read as follows: “The considerably high use of CAM modalities among Lebanese infertile patients, added to a poor CAM use disclosure to physicians suggests the need for physicians to initiate discussions with their patients regarding CAM use. In addition future research is needed in areas such as CAM education of healthcare workers and patients’ awareness on the proper use of the CAM modalities.” (page 16, lines 12-17)

7. Figures aren’t really necessary...Please, add to results part.

- **Author’s response:** As per the reviewer’s recommendation, Figure 1 and 2 were deleted and the data was added to Table 2 page 24
Reviewer #2

1. How was it determined that participants used functional foods for the purpose of infertility rather than just part of the diet?

- **Author’s response:** During the interview, participants were asked whether they have used any CAM modality since their diagnosis with infertility specifically for the purpose of improving their condition, including using functional foods. A sentence has been added to the methodology section to clarify the above. (page 7, lines 16-17)

2. Can the authors elaborate on the nature of side effects?

- **Author’s response:** As recommended by the reviewer, a sentence has been added to the methodology section elaborating on the nature of side effects that were investigated. The added sentence reads as follows “For the purpose of this study, side effects referred to any unpleasant event that could be experienced by the patient as a result of his/her use of a specific CAM modality. This unpleasant event could range from psychological distress to serious medical condition. (page 7, lines 19-22).

We sincerely hope that we have adequately addressed the reviewers’ concerns and look forward for a favourable decision in regards to our modified manuscript.

With Kind Regards,

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