Reviewer's report

Title: CAM practitioners in the Australian health workforce: an underutilized resource

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Reviewer: Stefanie Joos

Reviewer's report:

This article describes the situation of CAM practitioners in Australia suggesting that CAM practitioners are a underutilized resource.

As in many countries CAM practitioners are not nationally registered professions (except chiropractors, osteopaths). Therefore, little is known about education and work practices of CAM practitioners, even there is no reliable information about the actual number of CAM practitioners.

The purpose of this debate paper is to discuss the unwillingness of the medical and other health care professions to recognize the actual and potential contribution of the CAM workforce. Main reasons for the marginalization of CAM are suggested to be

• Prejudicial attitudes towards CAM workforce
• Overlooking CAM workforce in government policies
• Exclusion from the national registration

Possible strategies for making better use of CAM workforce are suggested: National registration, CAM E-health, redesigning roles of CAM practitioners and promoting CAM research.

The article focuses very specifically on the Australian situation. In the first section known data and study results are summarized (e.g. Table 2). In the second part arguments and possible strategies are presented.

Major compulsory revisions:

Altogether the article lacks novel insight and arguments. The arguments are already known. Furthermore, some important aspects are missing, e.g. the cost aspect.

Do patients have to pay extra money for CAM services provided by the CAM practitioners? What is the vision? That CAM provided by CAM practitioners is reimbursed?

Also educational aspects with regard to CAM practitioners, collaboration models etc. would be very important in this context.

In large part the debate remains on a surface level. For the reader it would be interesting to develop scenarios raising new questions.
Furthermore, a broader view across the Australian borders would be important for such a debate article. The integration of CAM is a relevant question in many European countries as well as in the United States and Canada. So it might be helpful to see which strategies are developed by other countries and to transfer these strategies to Australia.

See for example

or

http://www.cambrella.eu/

**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'