Reviewer's report

Title: Translation and adaptation of an international questionnaire to measure usage of complementary and alternative medicine (I-CAM-G)

Version: 3 Date: 26 June 2012

Reviewer: Wolfgang Weidenhammer

Reviewer's report:

The submitted paper addresses an important issue. Despite of numerous papers on the prevalence of CAM use methodologically sound instruments to measure CAM use are lacking or show a broad and unstandardized variety. It is a valuable first step to develop language specific versions of a questionnaire which claims international applicability.

Minor essential revisions:

1. The manuscript describes a 3-steps strategy: translation process, pre-test with qualitative analysis, and pilot on a population sample. Although this is considerable amount of work I would not call the studies 'validation' studies (as done at different places, see also abstract, conclusions). To my understanding validation would also include quality factors as reliability and objectivity.

2. When the development of a German version is published in English some basic conflicts arise. Especially readers of the German-speaking regions will be interested to see the German version and check it for potential use within their region. Consequently, I would strongly recommend that the German version would be accessible as e.g. background documents. One key issue here is language and it is highly relevant how terms well-known in English are used in German, understandable for ordinary citizens.

4. Abstract: Results: The rate of 96% with CAM use in the general population should be mentioned in the results section (and also built-in in table 2). The 210 individuals from the population are still a sample, and not the population itself. Please use this terminology consistently as it is done in Abstract/methods.

5. One may discuss what a measured CAM use of nearly 100% means. It is simply true or the underlying definition is so broad that nearly everything falls into this category.

6. Please refer to the recently published paper:
Quandt et al. Comparing two questionnaires for eliciting CAM use ... EUJIM 2012;4:e205-e211.

It contains a lot of aspects which would enrich the present discussion.

Discretionary revisions:

1. Subsamples of 'frequent' and 'infrequent' users. Referring to the defining
question I would call the 2 groups 'proCAM' or 'proCON' or somehow like this but not 'frequent' which has another meaning.

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.