Reviewer's report

Title: Acute adverse events from over-the-counter Chinese Herbal Medicines: A population-based survey of Hong Kong Chinese.

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Reviewer: Thomas Ostermann

Reviewer's report:

In their article „Acute adverse events from over-the-counter Chinese Herbal Medicines: A population based survey of Hong Kong Chinese.” the authors aimed at presenting safety data for Over-the-counter traditional Chinese herbal medicine (COTC) by means of a cross-sectional telephone survey conducted among Hong Kong Chinese adults in 2011 (n=1100).

Although this is a highly interesting topic, there are some methodological remarks concerning the manuscript and in particular the methods of logistic regression modeling.

Abstract:

- The abstract does not reflect the content of the full text. While the objective and method section is rather short the results only state percentages and no results from the logistic regression.

Introduction:

- The analysis of adverse events is the major topic of the manuscript. And indeed CAM has seen several publications on adverse events (i.e. the publications of Jeschke et al.) which also use logistic regression models to make assumptions for the risk of ADRs. Unfortunately the authors miss the international perspective of ADR research in their introduction, which should be more emphasized.

Methods:

- The methods talks about multivariate logistic regression models. Although this approach is well suited, the authors miss to describe how the results are presented. I.e. Standard analyses like the calculation of adjusted odds ratios with 95% CI should be described. Which quality criteria is chosen for model validity (AKA-IKE)

Results:

- Again the authors miss to present the results of the logistic regression model adequately (see above). OR-Results should be clearly integrated in a table.
- I’m a bit confused whether table 4 on “Correlates of adverse events among over-the-counter Chinese medicine users” is the desired table. If so, the table is unstructured and should present the OR in a straight forward manner.
Discussion:
- The authors discuss the “importance of increasing risk perception” for alternative medicine use. Thus the discussion should compare the data with other survey data like mentioned earlier.

I strongly recommend to reorganise and revise the manuscript before publication.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.