Reviewer's report

Title: Usage patterns and adverse experiences in traditional Korean medicine: results of a survey in South Korea

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Reviewer: Gioacchino Calapai

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Major questions

1) Q. The question is posed by the authors in a not well defined manner, since they declare that aims are to assess experience about the adverse events of traditional Korean medicine in Korea. However, the aims are not focused on specific items and too much vague. For example, it should be necessary to specify that aim is to report experiences only by non-health professionals.

Aim of the report is now better specified by the authors in the manuscript.

2) Q. The methods are not appropriated and methodology is not sufficiently described. Informed consent formula has been administered to the participants? People who conducted the interviews had sufficient scientific background on pharmacovigilance? They have been trained for this task?

How people knew the existence of the survey? How was the sampling methodology for the recruitment ?

- It is mentioned in the answer that informed consent has been requested by ethic Committee but it is not clear how it is obtained (oral ? written, acceptance of a on line formula ?

- Authors declare that collection of data occurred in different ways for over 60 years-old people. This difference influenced results ? In this case interviewers were trained ?

3) Q. Data do not add novelties. Another major problem is that the analysis of data regards collectively all TKMs without detailed description of adverse events of the single medicines. It could be better to associate to the text the questions contained in the survey.

- Authors answered that it is the first report on adverse experience of TKM targeting a suitable number of consumers (over 2,000).

- The items were added in in Methods section.

- Experience and number of TM usage

- Usage patterns of TM treatment (acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping therapy, physical
therapy and chiropractic) and herbal medicine
- Experience and symptom of adverse events on TM

However, methodology keeps to be too mauch vague:
- Authors use wording like adverse experience and adverse reaction. What is the difference?
People responding to the questionnaire know the definition of adverse reaction. They share its meaning with authors?

4) Q. Discussion is conditioned by limited accuracy of data collection and by the strong heterogeneous kind of therapies considered for the study. It should be newly addressed comparing data to others
previous published articles on the same topic (studies reporting non-professionals opinion). On the basis of the above considerations I do not consider discussion and conclusions well balanced because originating by confusing aims and not well organized planned methodology.

Authors answer as follows:
# Our manuscript is the first one to report on adverse experience of TKM targeting nonprofessionals.
So far, there was no paper on it.

The fact that it is the first time that one report on “adverse experience” of TKM is conducted does not mean that it could be carried out without a correct methodology.

English language has been improved.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have non financial competing interests.