Reviewer’s report

Title: Complementary and Alternative Medicine use in pregnancy: results of a multinational study.

Version: 2 Date: 24 July 2013

Reviewer: Dudzai Mureyi

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 4: The objectives of the study are clear: “to characterize the use of CAM in pregnancy from a multinational perspective” but the authors did not do a sound job of explaining why a multinational perspective was necessary. What are its merits over simply comparing several national studies previously carried out separately.

2. Page 7, second paragraph mentions that Chinese medicine use was not specifically queried. Could this have led to under reporting of herbal medicine use if respondents had used Chinese medicine to for reasons unrelated to specific ailments? Authors may choose to acknowledge this in the Discussion section.

3. The authors use the term: Determinants of herbal medicine use”. Maybe the more appropriate term would be” Factors significantly associated with Herbal medicine use”, since we are not particularly sure that the factors mentioned are the ones which actually determined herbal medicine use...

4. Factors associated with herbal medicine use were identified in the Results section and reiterated in the discussion section but the authors did not attempt to explain or suggest possible reasons for these associations in the Discussion section of their paper

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Line 6 on Background paragraph says “Surveys on the use of herbal medicines in pregnancy have been conducted in Australia, Canada, Italy, Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, and USA”- This sounds as if these are the only regions of the world where such surveys have been done. Maybe the authors could also acknowledge that similar surveys have been done in Africa and Asia.

2. Page 4 first sentence reads: In general, studies have found that herbal medicine users are women between over the age of 35......Authors should review this sentence so that it makes grammatical sense.

3. First sentence of Methods paragraph reads: This was a multinational, cross-sectional, internet-based study simultaneously performed in several countries worldwide. Was it done worldwide? Two continents: Africa and Asia
were not included in the survey. I therefore would not regard the study as a worldwide study.

4. Page 6, last sentence of first paragraph reads: Conventional medications were coded according to the ATC classification system. What does ATC stand for? Acronyms should be fully explained for the laypersons the first instance they are mentioned. Thereafter they can be used as just acronyms.

5. A grammar/typo error on page 6, second line of last paragraph: "When a multi-herbal combination was entered, a internet search"......instead of; an internet search....

6. Page 7, second paragraph, line 3 says: Other CAM medicines, such as acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicines, were not specifically queries. The word “and” is missing between the words “acupuncture and traditional”. Otherwise the authors can just add “etc” after the word “medicines” to make the sentence grammatically sound.

7. Page 10, paragraph 2, line 5 reads: highest source was from physicians.....maybe the authors could delete the word “from” just before the word “physicians”

8. Page 11 line 17 talks about how Russia has the lowest prevalence of "medication" use. Authors should specify that they are referring to allopathic medication at this point, since Herbal medicines are also a form of medication

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests