Reviewer's report

Title: The Quality of Postgraduate Medical Training in Integrative Medicine within the Public Health Care Systems of Germany and Switzerland. The Example of Anthroposophic Hospitals

Version: 2 Date: 21 February 2014

Reviewer: Ursula Wolf

Reviewer's report:

Review manuscript: Heusser et al. The Quality of Postgraduate Medical Training in Integrative Medicine within the Public Health Care Systems of Germany and Switzerland. The Example of Anthroposophic Hospitals

General comments

The topic of this manuscript is interesting and relevant given the fact that anthroposophic medicine is represented in several hospitals in Germany and Switzerland. The style of the manuscript is straightforward, the methodology and descriptive analysis sound, the results clearly stated and the conclusions are based on the results.

Before being ready for publication some major and minor comments on the manuscript should be observed.

Major comments

Throughout the entire manuscript please be careful with the terms “integrate” and “integrative medicine” because integrating means one item is integrated into another item - one cannot integrate x and y. Should the authors wish to use “and” they should consider using other terms such as combine.

Limitation of the study need to be discussed (more carefully)

References: One fourth of the references are self-citation which is an amount quite high. Please consider to reduce the number of self-citations.

Although some of the authors are quite fluent in English some parts of the text appear as a word by word translation.

Abstract

Please differentiate between CAM and AM.

The authors refer to evidence based CAM. Is there also such thing as evidence based anthroposophic medicine?

SW: ...better teaching culture in AM. Why should that be and what are the indicators?

GE heavier workload. Why should that be and what are the indicators?
Integration means “one into the other”, see also above.
Most medical schools provide electives…. Be more precise, where, which school, mandatory and elective classes
….little coordination or evaluation. Careful, as conditions may have changed since data generation of ref 13, 14
Page 5: Please give a rational why on ward PGMT should be the most effective form for training and AM compared to e.g. practices and offices.
References 23+24: Both references refer to Switzerland but not to Germany.
….in a completely integrated way. See above
Page 6: Why is it necessary to split and distribute the results in three papers?
Method
Please explain or comment on the “age” of the data July to December 2010 and how that relates to the fact that there are meanwhile more trainers and trainees and also to at least in part other conditions in Germany and Switzerland.
What do the authors mean by “more and more frequent”?
More time resources, consider wording.
Discussion
Delete “anthroposophic medicine” and leave only AM without the brackets because this term has already been introduced
Delete reference 28 because no reference is needed here and it is already explained and referenced before.
Selection and detection bias instead of selection bias
An asset of our study ..... Please split this sentence in two sentences.
..with complete hospital coverage.. Consider to be more careful in emphasizing it. Moreover, it is not completely true as e.g. arts therapies, eurythmic therapies and also interventions provided by nurses are not covered by DRG.
Generally, among trainees as well as trainers…… I do not understand this sentence.
Page 12
First § belongs to the results section. Adapt manuscript accordingly
Please give number of “longer working hours”.
Please set the “lower wages than their Swiss colleagues” in perspective to the living costs in the respective countries.
Reference 34 dates to 2006, are the numbers still valid in 2014?
Reference 35: Please consider the higher living costs in Switzerland.
Page 13:
One plausible explanation …. and thus reduced workload. Please check the logic in this sentence. That does not necessarily correlate. Please change the
and other such as anesthesiology... I do not agree with this statement after the semicolon: AM can very well play an important role in anesthesiology and surgery, for example using pre-operative eurythmic therapies and pre-, peri- and post-operative internally, externally applied medication and art therapies.

In general, the better scores ...., I do not understand the relatively greater importance of CON than AM

This still allows or even calls for improvement....Please clarify this sentence

Page 15:

Conclusion

Consider the above mentioned items and adapt the conclusion accordingly

Minor comments

Always use the same tense, i.e. past tense

Abstract

Medical schools offer basic CAM courses.... Please be more precise.

Take in to consideration that PGMT is not only possible in hospitals

Page 5

Replace organic with vital.

Reference 22: Better provide an English reference, i.e. 20.

....AM aspects in a completely integrated way. What is meant by this expression?

Page 6

Translate ETH: Federal Institute of Technology.

Page 7

Consider continued instead of continual education

Demographic data or personal data instead of personal characteristics

What do the authors mean by “complete survey”?

Page 8: Results

Always use past tense

Page 9: Very small instead of extremely small

Page 10:

Please consider replacing hardest

Again continued education

Again use past tense

Page 11
Study circle consider word AM instead of anthroposophic
What do the authors mean by “more and more frequent”? More time resources, consider wording.
Page 12
Work situation instead of working situation
Page 13
Capable humanistic role models and trainers, check wording
About the existence of trainers check wording
Study circle, check wording
Time resources to take part in them, check wording
But gynecology and obstetrics ... consider replacing disciplines with departments and also check the grammar in this sentence, “disciplines were too small”.
Page 14
Worked out theoretical background, check wording
Tables: The layout of the tables could be improved by inserting a line between the different questions.
References
Please give in brackets an English translation of the German references.
References in references referring to websites, please include when they were last accessed

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

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

**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