Reviewer's report

Title: Alternative and antioxidant therapies utilization by a sample of infertile males in Jordan: a cross sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 15 April 2014

Reviewer: Julie Brown

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions -
1. My main concern is with the age of some of the references in this paper. Many of the articles cited in the introduction are 10 to 15 years old and there are more recent references that could and indeed should be used to support the text. For example, in paragraph 2 the authors state 'Recent studies demonstrate that elevated levels of ROS...' these papers were in fact published in 1995 and 1997 and are therefore not recent. The paper would benefit significantly by an up to date introduction.

2. There are some sections of the paper that require some minor revision due to missing words or difficult sentence structure or grammatical errors.

3. The authors do not seem to be aware of the Cochrane systematic review Showell MG, Brown J, Yazdani A, Stankiewicz MT, Hart RJ. Antioxidants for male subfertility. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2011, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD007411. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007411.pub2. which currently includes 34 randomised controlled trials of 2876 couples with subfertility. Although none of the trials are from Jordan there are trials from Kuwait, Iran and Saudia Arabia. This review should be acknowledged.

4. The authors have clearly described the settings and inclusion criteria and summarised the demographics. It is unclear if all eligible men in the settings were approached to participate and this needs to be clarified by the authors.

5. In the methods section 'the study population was then segregated...' would be better rephrased as 'the study population was then subgrouped...'

6. In the results section it would be useful to see if there were any statistical differences between the age groups and if so between which groups.

7. In the results section the values in brackets referring to the number of respondents in each group is very confusing as it is not a direct reference to the preceding % of respondents to a question in the survey. e.g. only 79 (32%, n=244) of Group B. These may be better rewritten as 'only 32% (79/244) of Group B'

8. As the ultimate goals of these couples is a live baby it would be of interest to have the reported pregnancy rates for Groups A and B if this data is available to the authors.

9. The final sentence of the results section is not clear and needs further
clarification. Are the authors referring to pregnancy or something else?
10. In the discussion again there is some wording that may need to altered to improve readability.

11. In the discussion paragraph 2 the authors refer to 'numerous clinical trials' but only reference one. This is where the authors may want to refer to the Cochrane review.

12. I am not sure if the paragraph beginning 'the human body employs three general tactics...' adds anything to the discussion or if it would be better placed in the introduction.

13. The authors state that there is a need for physicians to become more aware of alternative and antioxidant therapies. This is indeed the primary purpose of the Cochrane systematic review that summarises randomised controlled trial evidence. I acknowledge that access to the Cochrane Library is not available in all countries but the contact authors of reviews are able to provide copies to interested parties.

14. Diabetes is misspelt in Figure 5a, Effectiveness is misspelt in Figure 6

Discretionary revisions -
1. I suggest that the authors change the wording of the title so that cross-sectional study becomes cross-sectional survey to better reflect the content of the article

2. I think that the word survey would be better suited than questionnaire. The paper does appear to be reporting on a simple survey of use of alternative and antioxidant therapies and does not appear to conduct any pre-testing of reliability and validity of the questions themselves and there is no statistical testing of the rigor of the questionnaire in the analysis which is mainly descriptive statistics.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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