Reviewer's report

Title: The use of complementary and alternative medicine after the completion of hospital treatment for colorectal cancer: Findings from a questionnaire study in Denmark

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Reviewer: Agnete Egilsdatter Kristoffersen

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Discretionary Revisions

1. The “Background” is a mixture of Background and Method. I suggest that the following two parts are moved to “Method”:

a. “In 2011-12, a pragmatic trial on energy healing as rehabilitation after completed hospital treatment for colorectal cancer was conducted in Denmark in order to test guidelines for effectiveness studies measuring personalized treatment goals [16-19]. As part of this study, a questionnaire examined participants’ use of CAM in the month prior to inclusion in the study; to enhance comparability across different studies, a previous questionnaire about CAM use in 14 European countries [20] was adapted to the local context. This article reports on this part of the study, which is the first study in Denmark to have examined the use of CAM by people who have completed hospital treatment for colorectal cancer”

b. “It is worth noting that respondents in this sample had completed treatment for colorectal cancer and were at different stages of cancer rehabilitation. Therefore, the reported use of CAM in the past month allows for a snapshot of respondents’ CAM use, although its use may be unrelated to cancer rehabilitation. To contextualize the identified prevalence of CAM use in colorectal cancer which effects men and women almost equally, findings are compared to CAM use by Danish cancer patients in general, and in relation to breast and prostate cancer, as examples of gender-specific cancers.”

2. I also suggest that the sentence “It explores CAM users’ socio-demographic characteristics, their motivation for using CAM, and perceived beneficial or harmful effects of diverse forms of CAM, amongst other issues” is rewritten into an aim or a research question and that “amongst other issues” is more clarified.

3. The method seems appropriate for the purpose of the study and the chosen questionnaire gives answers to many very relevant questions. The method is also well described. The limitation of the data is mainly that the data are collected from a group that has already agreed to participate in a study on spiritual healing and therefor might consist of people with a positive attitude to CAM, but this is well discussed in the Discussion. The response rate of only 31.5% however, should have been presented under the Method or Result section, not only in the
Discussion section as this is a great limitation of the generalizability of the findings.

4. The results are presented in a clear and appropriate way. Table 2 and 3 might profit from rating the most commonly reported reason first, ending up with the least reported before “other” for more easily access to the results for the reader. I also suggest that the authors consider two extra tables presenting the different therapies used and the pathways to CAM use.

5. The discussion is well balanced and adequately supported by the data. The limitations are clearly stated. The conclusion: “The use of CAM following completion of hospital treatment for colorectal cancer is wide-spread in Denmark” however, might need to be modified due to the low response rate of the study. The authors clearly acknowledge the work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished, and the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found. The writing is acceptable.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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