Reviewer’s report

Title: Gender differences in prevalence and associations for use of CAM in a large population study

Version: 2 Date: 11 August 2014

Reviewer: Cynthia Peterson

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Review of paper ‘Gender Differences in prevalence and associations for use of CAM in a large population study.

Overall: A well designed and well written study that was interesting, relevant and a pleasure to read. However, the following comments and suggestions could improve this manuscript.

1. Consistently use either US or UK English. There is a slight mixture of both (i.e. program, behavior, behaviour)

2. ABSTRACT: Conclusions: use ‘differ’ and not ‘differs’.

3. BACKGROUND: The section nicely makes the case as to why this study is relevant.

2nd paragraph: 2nd sentence: Insert the word ‘of’ between ’36.6%’ and ‘Norwegians’.

3rd paragraph: 5th sentence makes no sense as written. “In the Tromso study, the use of CAM was investigated in the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th…” what? Should the word ‘study’ follow 6th?

4. METHODS: Please write out what the abbreviation NAFKAM means. It is listed at the end under abbreviations but the first use in a manuscript should have it spelled out completely.

Table 2 is the first table to be mentioned in this paper in this Methods section. It should be renumbered. Thus tables 1 and 2 should be reversed. Additionally the difference between CAM 1 and 2 is not that clear in the table. Does the definition of CAM 2 mean that a person saw a CAM provider between 1 and 3 times? Currently it states “at least once”. However, CAM 1 is defined as more than 3 times.

Statistical analysis: Please provide more details as to which variables were analyzed using Chi-squared and which with ANOVA.

5. RESULTS: Tables 4 and 5: There are 2 spelling errors in both tables. ‘Collage’ should be ‘College’. Both are words used in English but have drastically different meanings. ‘Ethnisity’ should be ‘Ethnicity’.
6. DISCUSSION: Good. However, a short comment about the fact that there were several statistically significant differences in the results between the genders that are not necessarily clinically relevant due to the very large sample size (i.e. 77.1% vs. 78%, p = 0.032; 38.8% vs. 41%, p = 0.0001) should be added. It is recognized that the authors did not comment on those particular Results in the Discussion.

Limitations section: 2nd Sentence should read “…non-response to a CAM question” and not “questions”.

3rd sentence: add ‘s’ to ‘question’.