Reviewer's report

Title: Development and Validation of a New Global Well-Being Outcomes Rating Scale for Integrative Medicine Research.

Version: 1 Date: 14 September 2003

Reviewer: Charlotte Paterson

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper reports novel work in an important field, and is written with clarity. It includes three sub-studies but successfully combines them into a single paper. The title and abstract accurately describe the project, and the data is sound and analysis clear and the tables well drawn.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
The paper did not provide any information about how acceptable and feasible the new scale, AOIS, was for participants, and consequently the statement in the second line of the discussion that the AOIS is ‘acceptable’ is not demonstrated. This is especially important as previous work with VAS scales suggest that up to 10% of some populations will have difficulty understanding the task.
Revisions necessary to support this statement are:
1. A clearer description of to what extent the AOIS was completed with/ without help in the three studies. If help was given, it should be described, and quantified as much as possible.
2. Numbers of people who were approached/ started/ finished completion in study one, and the total numbers that were given the questionnaire to complete in studies 2 and 3.
3. This would allow description or figures on response rate/ incomplete or wrongly completed questionnaires.
4. Some discussion of acceptability and feasibility in the light of this.
Other suggestions for discretionary revisions are:
5. Although the scale is carefully described, it would be clearer if the scale was reproduced in the paper exactly as given to the patient. Was the VAS horizontal or vertical?
6. Is test-retest reproducibility, or something similar, planned in future work?

Minor Compulsory Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
None

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests: