Reviewer's report

Title: Practice Patterns of Naturopathic Physicians: Results From a Random Survey of Licensed Practitioners in Two US States

Version: 1 Date: 1 August 2004

Reviewer: Mary Koithan

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a very well written manuscript that clearly describes the background of the information, the historical practice of naturopathic medicine, the methods and the results. It is easy to follow and provides an overview of practice characteristics of NM. It is a contribution to the knowledge of the field and will help further work in this area.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. pg 6 - The authors refer to prescription and minor surgery as "higher level interventions". While these are perhaps more invasive types of interventions, they are not necessarily "higher" (using what measure). Is there not a better way to describe these interventions - more invasive perhaps. Higher denotes that those physicians who use these interventions are perhaps better than someone who does not. In CAM/IM I feel that this is not the case - those interventions are alternative choices, not better.

2. Abstract -- Objective - to describe and compare the practice...... When I first began to read I actually thought that you were going to describe the process of intervention (clinical decision making patterns, process of diagnosis and treatment etc). Instead this is about practice patterns and demographics. Is there a way to better language that so that qualitative researchers who read this don't expect to find a grounded theory about how the practice actually occurs?

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. pg 9 - There is a sentence under the description of the sample beginning "All high volume ..... This sentence made me pause as I read the manuscript. I had to re-read it several times to be sure that I understood what you were trying to convey. I believe it is a matter of grammar/formatting. Could you please re-word the sentence so that it is clearer to the readers. Perhaps fracturing the sentence into 2 would help. Or perhaps --- "While all high volume practitioners were selected to participate in the study, only the first 10....." This is not a question about sampling but rather one of format.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None