Reviewer's report

Title: Naturopaths practice behaviour: provision and access to information on complementary and alternative medicines

Version: 1 Date: 22 May 2005

Reviewer: Heather Boon

Reviewer's report:

General
This is an interesting paper written on an important topic.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Given the very low response rate, it is important to explore how the responders might be different from non-responders. Is it possible to provide a comparison based on geographical location; number of claims submitted to the insurance company; sex of the respondent etc? In the discussion the authors mention that the responders are similar to those from another study -- perhaps a chart showing the demographics of the responders here compared to those in the other study would help. Without this kind of information, it is not clear how trust-worthy the data are.

2. It is not clear to me that the authors can comment on naturopaths' behaviour per se -- what we have are self-reports of behaviour which are likely to be biased toward what they think they are supposed to be doing. It is important to clarify this throughout the paper. This is an important first step, but it would be necessary to observe naturopaths' behaviour to comment about it with confidence.

3. How was the sample size determined? What is the likelihood that the results presented are accurate given the small response rate? (i.e., what was the power of the study?)

4. It would appear that always recommending patients purchase products from their own clinic (as opposed to a pharmacy or health food store) has ethical implications -- could you comment on those in the discussion? You appear to suggest that this is a safer practice than recommending products be purchased elsewhere....what is the justification of this?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
- end of first paragraph in the discussion (and repeated in the abstract) -- please clarify what is meant by "to not recommending purchase of herbal products available over the counter" -- how will this improve safety of practice?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
- it might be helpful to include a brief summary of the regulation and training of naturopathic practitioners in Australia since it seems to vary so much around the world -- this would provide additional context for the reader
**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.