Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluating complementary and alternative medicine interventions: in search of appropriate patient-centered outcome measures

Version: 1 Date: 9 August 2006

Reviewer: Charlotte Paterson

Reviewer’s report:

General
This paper reports on an on-line survey of CAM researchers, practitioners and students in Canada. The objective of the survey, and of the paper, was to assess the specific needs for a database that covers a wide range of outcomes measures for CAM research and to develop a framework for such a database.

The paper is clearly structured and written, addresses an important topic, reports valuable new primary data, and develops the results into an outcome framework. The introduction, discussion and references are appropriate and interesting, and the paper ends with a clear statement of how the research findings are going to be used. The framework is clearly represented as a table and as a figure, and appears comprehensive and practical.

I have very few criticisms and suggestions for improvement, and those listed below are of a minor and optional nature.

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

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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. Abstract. Method, line 4: ‘was’ should be ‘were’.
2. Acknowledgements: remove (it is only one s, right?)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. References 3-9, which relate to books that have been published on health outcome measures include 3 editions of McDowell, whereas the 3rd edition should be sufficient. Instead the authors may like to reference Ann Bowlings 2 books, that I find invaluable:

2. The authors do not discuss their framework in relation to other frameworks of outcome in CAM. This would be interesting, although it would increase the complexity of the paper. Other frameworks are much less comprehensive. Examples of other frameworks include:
   - Andrew Long and colleagues (paper’s ref 14) Health and healing philosophy and practice; User-practitioner relationship; Set of techniques
   - Paterson & Britten ( JACM. 2004.10:791-801) page 794, fig 1.

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:
I declare that I have no competing interests