Reviewer’s report

Title: Decisions to use complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) by male cancer patients: information-seeking roles and types of evidence used

Version: 1 Date: 16 May 2007
Reviewer: Dianne M Shumay

Reviewer’s report:

General
This manuscript is clear and well-written and describes an important concern for clinicians regarding the source of information on CAM preferred by men with cancer.

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

1. The authors describe their sampling method as purposeful but do not give the reader a complete idea of what attributes they were looking for. Please be more detailed about what the researchers were aiming for (e.g. diversity of cancers, stage, age, treatment locale?). Also was the desired range of attributes attained via their recruitment methods? Please state in results or describe as limitation in discussion.

2. Research ethics oversight committee? Was this study approved by an NHS or other committee for human subjects? Please include a line to that effect.

3. If the authors have the data, it would be helpful to know what the ethnic, educational status and socio-economic status are of the participants, as these variables have been linked to CAM use as well as information seeking behavior in previous studies.

The literature contains an article that differs somewhat in demographics but otherwise closely resembles the aims of the authors and should therefore be addressed in the background/discussion sections (See citation below for Kakai et al., 2003). The authors are encouraged to consult the paper by Kakai et al. and to describe in the discussion how their study compares with these findings. The Kakai et al. paper found differences by ethnicity and education level. These variables were not included in the description of the sample, but should be (see above.)


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. Page 6 line 3 typo: "...framework and agree [on] broad themes."

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.