Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring Perceived Effects of Drinking an Extract of Basidiomycetes Agaricus blazei Murill: A Survey of Japanese Consumers with Cancer

Version: 2  Date: 2 July 2007

Reviewer: Philip Harris

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer's report: I strongly agree with the authors about the need for well designed and evaluated outcome measure for use in randomized controlled trials of CAM substances. This paper makes a useful contribution although the psychometric properties of the instrument introduced are in need of further evaluation.

I think the paper would benefit from the following minor essential revisions:
* The type of factor analysis used should be identified in the methods section.
* I did not understand the explanation of the way in which the scores were calculated (results section, paragraph 4, last sentence) and I could not reconcile this scoring system with Table 3. Please clarify.
* The results clearly indicate that the modal response was 'no effect'. This seems to be an important finding which needs to be discussed.

And the following discretionary revisions:
* The abstract is clear and informative but the conclusion (which is repeated in the overall conclusion) implies that favourable effects were generally found among the cancer patients surveyed rather than the respondents (33%). I think this could be clarified by using the term respondents instead of consumers in the conclusions.
* The limitations associated with a 33% response rate should be discussed. It is known that responders tend to be different from non-responders.
* I would have liked more specific information, in the discussion, about how the instrument would be further developed.
Finally it is not clear, to me, whether the funding body for this work is also the manufacturer of the product under consideration. This needs to be clarified.