Reviewer's report

**Title:** Patient satisfaction of primary care for musculoskeletal diseases: A comparison between Neural Therapy and conventional medicine

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 11 September 2007

**Reviewer:** Paul E Beattie

**Reviewer's report:**

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) Patient Satisfaction of Primary Care

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well-defined?

The authors present a research question, i.e. “what are the differences between neural therapy and conventional medicine in patient evaluations and patient-physician relationships in primary care.” This question is quite vague and does not reflect the title, i.e. “Patient satisfaction” thus; it is unclear what the authors are specifically attempting to measure. A more specific purpose statement, that is strongly developed in the introduction, would be helpful.

2. Are the methods well-described and reproducible?

It is not clear how primary care physicians were randomly selected. There is no rationale for the uneven sample size between NT (n=18) and primary care physicians (n=77). It is also unclear how the specific patient sample was selected. Clarifying these issues will improve the reproducibility of the methods.

It is not clear how or why patients received appointments with their respective providers. This is a big issue because of the potential for selection bias on the part of the patients.

The content and measurement properties of the questionnaires should be described in more detail. For example, more information regarding the development and validation process for the questionnaires should be included. The degree of error should be reported to determine if observed differences are greater than the likelihood of error.

3. Are the data sound and well-controlled?

Without knowledge of the measurement properties of the instruments the validity of the data is unknown.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data disposition?
The discussion of data analysis would be improved by clarifying the specific variables to be evaluated. Considering the small, and uneven, sample size the potential for type II error should be addressed. The term, “significant” is used in many instances but the exact p-values are unclear. For example on the tables one cannot tell which specific comparisons are significant.

The authors should address the use of a .05 alpha level. This is important because the potential for type I error because of the repeated use of means testing.

The rationale for dichotomizing the Lickert scales into 2 variables should be described.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well-balanced and adequately supported by data?

The authors should address more of the limitations of the study such as uneven sample size and potential for selection bias.

The conclusion states that “increased application of neuraltherapeutics by primary care physicians could therefore be reasonable”. This might be developed in the discussion but is not appropriate for a conclusion because of the observational nature of the study.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

The objective in the abstract is not consistent with the research question in the text. The results should include contain data. The conclusion in the abstract is different from the conclusion in the text.

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

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests