Reviewer's report

Title: Animal-based remedies as complementary medicine among people in semi-arid region, NE Brazil

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Reviewer: Ina Vandebroek

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

The article by Alves et al. represents a qualitative ethnozoological study in Brazil. The main goal of the research was to make an inventory of animal remedies sold by 16 merchants in markets of Santa Cruz do Capibaribe City. However, according to the title, the manuscript deals with “animal-based remedies as complementary medicine among people in semi-arid region, NE Brazil”. I consider the present title too broad and general in relation to the focus of the Ms., which is on animal remedies, merchants and markets in the city of a particular municipal district. The manuscript also needs to be reviewed by a native English speaker to improve grammar. It contains a lot of awkward spelling; two examples of which include: (1) [start quote] In the literature, coincidences came across regarding the usage of species utilized for medicinal means in the municipality of Santa Cruz [end quote]; (2) [start quote] ...according to a local story, while the Cyanocorax cyanopogon ingests the alimentary remains of an asthmatic one, this will be cured [end quote].

My main problem with this manuscript is that its conclusions (about the choice of animals as medicines as compared to conventional, Western medicine; about the persistence of traditional knowledge in the face of modernization; about conservation priorities for medicinal animals) are not based on primary research data. These conclusions do not follow from the research objective, which is to develop an inventory of medicinal animals. In general, I find the manuscript quite meager in its discussion and conclusions.

In addition, I would like to see some clarification for the following observations:
- interviewees reported 37 animal species and the authors describe that this is a “great variety”. On the other hand, from literature data it is known that Alves and Rosa registered 97 animal species in metropolitan areas in N and NE Brazil. Hence, in comparison with the latter result 37 is not such an extraordinary high number of species
- when the authors refer to "public and free markets" do they refer to different types of markets? What is the difference between "public" and "free"?
- what is meant with "predefined interviewees". The use of "predefined" sounds awkward in this context
- it is unclear what the authors mean when they first state that 2 medicinal
species have not been previously documented in Brazil (among them the egg shell of ostrich) and next continue to say that “ostrich is used and documented in Brazil, although it was registered as medicinal in other countries”. I presume that they forgot to add the word “not” in this sentence
- what are “illnesses that are identified as treatable”?

Minor Essential Revisions:
wrong use of several words, and use of neologisms, including: subsides, expressive, evidenciate, exoeskeleton

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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