Author's response to reviews

Title: Use of complementary and alternative medicine and self-tests by coronary heart disease patients.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Editor
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Dear Sir

Use of complementary and alternative medicine and self-tests by coronary heart disease patients

We have addressed the referees’ comments on the above paper as listed below:-

Reviewer: Mathie

1. Page 6, last line: it needs to be explained which group data were analysed by t-test
   The sentence ‘Mean Z-scores for the scales of attitudes to health and CAM’. has been added.

2. Page 7, patient characteristics: last sentence would read better as: ‘Similar numbers of patients were referred to home and to hospital cardiac rehabilitation programmes’
   This sentence has been added.

3. Page 7, Self-management: the number using CAM was 39

4. Page 8, end of first para: Each of the six main themes could be itemised numerically: the scale numbers have been inserted in the text

5. Page 8, Attitudes to health and CAM
   The first paragraph of this section has been revised to read: ’Table 2 shows that for all of the scales, except individual responsibility and consumerism, the mean score was greater in the group of self-management users, the difference being statistically significant for four of the eight scales. This suggests that patients who used self-management were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the way doctors behave towards patients (scale 3); to take a ‘holistic’ attitude towards their health (scale 5); to be less accepting of medical power and to favour equality in the doctor/patient relationship (scale 6). Mean scores for the fourth scale which showed statistically significant data (scale 7) were in the opposite direction and showed that self-management users were less likely to feel that being healthy involves effort by the individual.’

6. Page 12: first sentence: The directions of predictor influences are not stated clearly
   This sentence has been revised to read: ‘Previously identified socio-demographic predictors in a general population of being more likely to use self-care are high educational level and extent of and familiarisation with medical knowledge [47].’

7. Page 12, Conclusion: line 4:
   ‘more popular’ has been inserted
8. Reference 39:
The correct citation has been included

9. Tables 2 & 4:
s has been removed and p values inserted

10. Table 3:
P values have been added

Reviewer: Najm

Major compulsory revisions

1. Data has been checked-see response to point 3 referee 1
2. We have commented in the discussion that the overall % of patients using either of the two forms of self-management investigated (CAM /self-test kits which are typically purchased ‘over-the-counter’) was similar to rates of CAM or over-the-counter use among the general UK population. As this is first UK study to focus on these types of self-management among CHD patients further UK comparisons cannot be made.
3. It is true that the data on CAM is limited. However one of the aims of the study was to investigate CAM use among this group of patients and from the data collected CAM use appears to be very limited. And low compared with studies in other countries. As this is the first UK study which includes questions on CAM use in this type of population, we feel this is important and would prefer to include the data and make this point. Referee 1 appears happy with the inclusion of this data.

Minor Essential revisions

1. This sentence has been reworded to read:
   There is increasing evidence that CAM, particularly herbal medicine, can be effective in the management of cardiovascular problems [7, 8]. However it has been reported that some herbal medicines can cause adverse reactions with orthodox CHD medication [9, 10].

Discretionary revisions

Inclusion of Tables 3 & 4: We would prefer to include these tables as we feel it is the clearest way of presenting the data. Referee 1 appears happy for these to be included.

Table 4: N has been added for each group and additional information in the heading to clarify what is meant by Self-Management Users

Yours sincerely

Dr SM Greenfield