Reviewer's report

Title: Patterns of Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use among People with Reported Positive Exceptional Experiences in Relation to Cancer

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Reviewer: Peter Mackereth

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Abstract - When I read the abstract background I was expecting some qualitative analysis. I was confused by 'mixed - method approach' and the 'explorative' nature of the interviews. What was the purpose of the unstructured interviews - is this (hopefully rich) data to be analysed in further paper(s). It seems that what we have here is some sort of mapping/patterns of CAM usage. Can this be made more explicit /clarified in this part of the abstract?

Background - page number for quotation in text

Page 9 and 12 - biplot - can the authors add more information for readers.

Findings

In the Method section (p.7) there was a statement used to describe the approach as allowing insight into people's perspective related to 'extreme' and 'extraordinary' accounts, the title itself includes the phrase '...positive "Exceptional" experiences" but yet the paper seems focused on a mapping exercise of usage. I didn't get an understanding or insights into these perspectives. Are there further papers being prepared on this?

Patterns of CAM usage (p.12)

I did not find the patterns easy to understand. The authors need to make the Figure 1 more accessible to readers. Perhaps some sort of key or shading/blocking to clarify the relationships? Need to define Eigenvalues \( d = 1 \) Maybe a statistician can advise

Table 3

Typos

supergreeens (3 e's)
zink ? zinc

Conclusions/Recommendations
The discussion and conclusions are appropriate and supported by the analysis of the data. I would like to have known more about the purpose of the 1-3 hour interviews. It seems to me that structured interviews seeking the mapping information maybe have provided the data required for this investigation.

I would recommend Minor essential Revision - suggest revisiting the title of the paper, the background in the Abstract and also the Method section to reflect the mapping/pattern of usage information extrapolated from the data. I would also recommend that Figure 1 be revisited to make it easier to understand in relation to the interpretation in the text.