Author's response to reviews

Title: Knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding gemstone therapeutics in a selected adult population in Pakistan

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COVER LETTER FOR THE REVISED MANUSCRIPT

1)- Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The reference on page 7 (Ather et al. [21]) does not contain the information which the authors cite in the manuscript text. The reference describes a questionnaire completed at the CHC but does not provide evidence for the number of beds, number of patients, services offered etc.

Response and Explanation:--

Reference 21 (Ather et al) has been removed in the revised version of the manuscript. After discussion on this point, the authors realized that since we have not conducted a study on in-patients at AKUH, we could easily omit these details (regarding the number of beds, number of patients, services offered etc), since they appear irrelevant in the context of our study design and objectives as we focused only on outpatients. The above cited reference was also omitted because it didn’t contain the information as pointed out by the reviewer. We apologize for the oversight.

2)- Reference 8 does not state that the main reason for use of CAM is dissatisfaction with conventional care rather these authors report the main reason for use is congruence with personal health beliefs (paragraph 2, page 4). Further the statement that CAM are used for cancer, inflammatory bowel disease and multiple sclerosis are not supported by reference 8, which is listed as the citation (paragraph 3, page 4).

Response and Explanation:--

2)- I apologize on behalf of all the authors specially with regards to this point. The reviewer is absolutely correct in pointing out that the quoted reference does not provide the stated reason in the manuscript. We have therefore rectified this
mistake of ours. Referencing has been modified in accordance with the reviewers recommendations and now reference 11[page4, paragraph2] in the new manuscript addresses factors associated with CAM use and has been cited for the same purpose.

Reference 8 of the previous manuscript is now reference 13. The information derived from this particular reference has been qualified in the light of the reference to clarify things.

3. The information which has been added to the end of the discussion regarding interviewers’ impressions should not be included unless the information was collected at documented at the time of the interviews rather than a remembrance some months later. If this data was collected as part of the project methods then it should be described in the Methods.

Response and Explanation:-
3)- This information was not collection formally as a part of the project. Therefore in the light of the recommendations made by the reviewer, it has been removed.

4- It is unclear why the authors think that a possible reason for attending the CHC is dissatisfaction with CAM – what is the evidence for this? Also the statement that they may have attended the CHC due to a direct consequence of satisfaction with CAM is confusing and unclear.

Response and Explanation:-
We realized that this would not be a very clear point to raise in the discussion without solid evidence to back it. Therefore, we have omitted this point from the discussion so as not to confuse the reader. We can’t say with confidence that the respondents may have attended the CHC due to a direct consequence of satisfaction with CAM because we didn’t assess this in our questionnaire. Hence, the omission.

5- No data is contained in Table 2 (in the files called Figure 2) - the headings are present but no % are shown. Table 3 (Figure 3) shows Knowledge Variables not belief variables as indiacted in the manuscript text - Belief Variable data is shown in Table 4 (Figure 4) It is unclear whether the data in the last two sentences on the 1st paragraph on page 11 refer to % of the total (i.e. of 400) or of a subgroup (e.g. those believing gemstones have an impact on health). The remainder of the Tables are not numbered correctly.

Response and Explanation:-
The tables have been correctly organized and arranged. Also the data in the last
two sentences in the 1st paragraph on page 11 has been clarified.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Delete ‘cross-sectional’ from the first line of the Methods.

Response:- This point has been addressed. The word cross-sectional has been deleted.

Discretionary Revisions
1. In the Strengths and Limitations the authors state that this is a novel questionnaire. What aspect is novel?

Response and Explanation:-
We realized that the word “novel” may have been an overstatement on our part. We have removed this word.