Reviewer’s report

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

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 6 December 2008

**Reviewer:** Jenny Wilkinson

**Reviewer’s report:**

- **Major Compulsory Revisions**

  1. As per my previous review I have significant concerns about the substantial use of non-peer reviewed or other high quality sources in the paper. Only 13 of the 27 cited references are from journals with the bulk of the listed references from popular websites, online gemstone communities. These sites typically provide no reference lists or other evidence to support their claims. I appreciate that this may be an area where there is little or no scientific or medical literature however I would have been more convinced about the context and rationale for the study if authoritative texts on traditional and folk medical practices and gemstone/crystal healing had been consulted rather than popular websites. I feel that the Introduction still needs considerable rewriting to conform to the normal conventions of scientific writing.

  2. The authors have not addressed my earlier comment regarding the nature of the participants in this study. As they were all attending a health clinic it is reasonable to assume that they have a health issue for which they are seeking treatment. This information is important in understanding why they use of particular gemstones may be more prevalent than others, whether this group is representative of the wider population and whether they are using gemstones for cosmetic or healing reasons.

  3. The revised material in the section entitles Chi square test results would be enhanced by inclusion of all data where statistical comparisons are made. Just presenting the p value without knowing what the values being compared are makes it very difficult for the reader to know which is the higher/greater value of the parameters being compared.

- **Minor Essential Revisions**

  1. Remove the phrase ‘cross-sectional study’ from the Abstract

  2. Add the name of the country to the Abstract rather than saying ‘in a developing country’

  3. Statements such as “aspirin was obtained …. but is now hailed as a mainstream wonder drug” should be removed or rewritten so that they are less sensationalist. Also this statement is attributed to reference 14, yet there is no mention of aspirin or willow bark on this website.
4. Sources are required for the material which has been added on page 7 - paragraph starting “Pakistan currently …”

5. There should be consistent use of decimals – in some places the percentages are rounded to whole numbers while in others they are given to one decimal place

- Discretionary Revisions

1. Suggest removing paragraph at the bottom of page 4 starting “A stroll down …” as it does not contribute to the topic of the paper (i.e. gemstones for healing)

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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