Reviewer's report

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

Version: 4 Date: 10 January 2009

Reviewer: Jenny Wilkinson

Reviewer's report:

While I still have concerns about the use of unsubstantiated claims from web-sites and other non-peer-reviewed sources as the basis for scientific paper the authors have nevertheless adequately addressed my previous concerns. I feel the paper would have been significantly strengthened if the authors had referred to classical traditional medicine texts for their information on gemstone/crystal therapy. I also still find the presentation of the results difficult to follow and there are a number of errors as listed below.

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.

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).

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.

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.

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 indicated in the manuscript text - Belief Variable data is shown in Table 4 (Figure 4). The table on Knowledge Variables do not appear to be referred to in the text. It is also 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

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

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

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