Reviewer's report

Title: The CAM Health Belief Questionnaire (CHBQ): Development and Validation of a Short Survey Instrument for Use in Medical Education Settings

Version: 1 Date: 22 October 2003

Reviewer: Truls Ostbye

Reviewer's report:

General

Throughout the document there were numerous formatting and grammatical errors. Some of this may be related to our printer, however the entire document needs to be edited again. For example, on our page 4, there is no space between the words optimal and strategies. This type of error appeared several times throughout the document.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Page 3, sentence 3 beginning with Strategies: This sentence could be better integrated into the background section.

Minor Compulsory Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. All abbreviations should be written out the first time it appears in the abstract and the text. For example, CAM is never defined in the document. UC Irvine should read University of California Irvine.
2. Tables should be attached in the same order that they are listed in the text. Currently, Table 3 appears in the text first. Also, on page 10 there is a reference to Table Z, which does not exist.
3. Header for Discussion section should read Discussion and Conclusions.
4. Title on paper does not well encompass the contents of the paper. Specifically, it does not include the level of CAM use and the information related to resources used by medical students to learn about CAM.
5. Explain how classes were selected and why specific groups of students were selected.
6. Has the survey instrument been tested for responsiveness/sensitivity to change?
7. Page 9, last sentence before psychometrics statement about alpha coefficient seems hypothetical and speculative.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1.
   a. For the purposes of this paper CAM should be clearly defined. The terms alternative/integrative medicine, CAM, integrative approach to healing, and holistic medicine seem to be used interchangeably. Having these terms clearly defined and elaborated will help the reader understand what the “underlying construct” (page 12) might be.
   b. Table 3: Some statements are not obviously related to CAM. For example, the fifth statement which begins with, “A patients expectations…” This adds to our confusion as to what the “underlying construct” might be.
c. Explain how modalities were generated. What qualifies a behavior as CAM (especially massage, spirituality, and relaxation)?

2. The overall approach appears to be the comparison of the CHBQ to the IMAQ, which is implied to be the “gold standard”. However, there are some major differences between the two. For example, the IMAQ targets physicians, while the CHBQ is geared toward the general population. Taken at face value the CHBQ appears to be suitable to multiple groups though it was only tested with medical students. Since both were not designed for or administered to the same groups, the surveys may not truly be comparable. This limitation needs to be addressed as it seems to affect the validity of the paper.

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its specialized field or of broad interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes

**Declaration of competing interests:**

None declared.