Author's response to reviews

Title: A qualitative study of naturopathy in rural practice: A focus upon naturopaths’ experiences and perceptions of rural patients and demands for their services

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Author's response to reviews: see over
RE: Manuscript 6020037393620739 Resubmission

Dear Editors,

On behalf of all authors I would like to thank the editors for provisionally accepting the article “A qualitative study of naturopathy in rural practice: A focus upon naturopaths’ experiences and perceptions of rural patients and demands for their services”.

We have taken on board the associate editor’s comments and recommendations and addressed them as appropriate.

We have attached a point by point summary of all changes we have made in relation to reviewer comments. As requested we have also resubmitted a “tracked changes” document to enable the reviewers and editors to observe the changes as they have occurred in the manuscript.

We have also gone through the manuscript formatting checklist and made minor changes to ensure compliance with this checklist.

Again we would like to thank the reviewers and the editorial team BMC Health Services Research for provisionally accepting this paper and look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jon Wardle
Associate Editor’s Comments

1. 3rd line of abstract: 'Data also suggest...' (not suggests);

We agree with this recommendation and as such have amended the sentence as suggested to now read:

‘Data also suggest CAM use is highest amongst rural Australians’

2. Last paragraph of results section should be in the discussion. I suggest it could be integrated with the new para in the discussion section about the 'perceived affinity...for preventive measures'.

We thank the editor for their comments and agree with this recommendation. We have deleted the last paragraph from the results section and have now integrated it into a larger paragraph in the part of the discussion the editor has recommended. The new paragraph now reads:

‘Further research is particularly important given the fact that naturopaths perceptions of their patients may not always compare with the normative data. For example, perceived affinity of rural population for preventive measures does seem to correlate with rural patients self-perceived notions of independence, stoicism, self-reliance and resilience [53-55] it does not seem consistent with epidemiological data relating to the higher prevalence of a number of preventive risk factors in rural areas [56]. These accounts of the naturopaths reveal the complexities of health-seeking behaviours in rural areas. Although rural patients have a relatively independent outlook and a natural affinity to prevention and self-management, these attitudes and affinities are not without their own ambiguities and they may in time act as a barrier deterring people from seeking professional (conventional or alternative) help. The stoical approach to health or life of the rural population, plus the shortage of healthcare service in remote regions, are important factors that may contribute to the higher prevalence of risk factors in rural areas relative to metropolitan areas.’ (p. 16)

There are other minor changes that the editors will notice in the document. These are related to changes in citation formatting following the deletion and reinsertion of the paragraph content (and its reference) as recommended by the associate editor.