Reviewer's report

Title: Patients’ experiences of health care in the public and private sectors: A qualitative study of acupuncture

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2011

Reviewer: Ayesha De Costa

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
No, this can be further clarified. There are too many parallel strands at the moment. It might be good for the authors to more clearly focus the paper on Patient choices of public and private healthcare through a Consumerism lens using acupuncture as an example. At the moment the paper is does not have a coherent thread running through it, it switches between consumerism, CAM and perspectives on CAM. The introduction and the objectives need to be more streamlined/ Might be useful to use acupuncture only as an example, and focus more on the lens of consumerism to look at how these choices are made. The implications could be applicable to other modalities of treatment as well.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes

3. Are the data sound? The authors give a clear description of their methods. However methods of trustworthiness and reliability of the qualitative analysis could be written up as a sub section. What about reflexivity?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The results need to be streamlined and the discussion needs to focus more specifically on those results and their implications. It is rather broad at this stage.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? No, a section on methodological limitations will be useful. There are a number that could be mentioned.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, though the body of literature reviewed is exhaustive, the connections are still ‘choppy’ and need to be developed into coherent arguments.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Title yes. Abstract needs streamlining after reworking the manuscript

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes
• Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The paper has merit and brings out some interesting points. However it needs to be more focused, particularly the introduction, the aim and the discussion. The issues raised in the discussion need to be more closely allied to the results. The results at the moment have elements that could be part of the discussion. A section on methodological limitations is required.

**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