Reviewer's report

Title: Coping with uncertainty during healthcare-seeking. A qualitative study in Lao PDR.

Version: 3 Date: 27 March 2013

Reviewer: Lisa Welch

Reviewer's report:

This revised manuscript reflects attention to the concerns and suggestions raised in the first review. It more clearly describes the methods and the ways in which the analysts saw uncertainty entering into care seeking. The additional comments below mainly are intended to point out a few areas in which the intended meaning could be clarified, at least from the perspective of this reader.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Abstract: Please clarify whether the last two sentences are related to each other. That is, who took into account “only to a limited extent” the social aspects of seeking healthcare? Was it health workers, which leads to the last sentence about health workers needing more preparation for recognizing the social and cultural aspects of care seeking?

2. Background, paragraph 2: Please clarify the meaning of the sentence, “It means that its field is the conversation with fellow humans that is the source of guidance for the afflicted…” What is the referent for “its field”? Does that refer to uncertainty?

3. Discussion, paragraph 6: The sentence “Community members expressed uncertainty about selecting the right provider, about the likelihood of finding the real cause of the illness, about spending savings on treatments, and ultimately about the likelihood of recovery” nicely states the ways in which uncertainty enters healthcare seeking for the participants in your study. These points are highlighted in the abstract as general conclusions. In a similar way, it would be helpful to the reader to also highlight these points in the discussion. In the current version, the sentence is a bit buried in the middle of many other ideas and easily could be lost on the reader.

4. Conclusion, sentence 3: Please clarify the meaning of the phrase “increased number of available providers”. Do you mean a larger number of providers of the same type, or do you mean a larger number of types of available providers?

Discretionary Revisions

5. Background, paragraph 4: Does the word “unexpected” capture the intended meaning in the sentence “The outcome of treatments is often still unexpected…” Do you mean that the outcomes of treatment are “uncertain”? Or are the outcomes truly unexpected?
6. Methods, paragraph 2, last sentence: Should the order of “high and low” vs. “low and high” be consistent, or is the opposite order intended?

7. Discussion, paragraph 7: The meaning of the sentence “Uncertainties also related to ways of avoiding new worries and how to think of future illness decisions…” is unclear to me.

8. Table 1. For ease of reading, please define “VHV” and “TBA” in a note in the table, as you have done in the text.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

**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.