Reviewer's report

Title: Use of dietary supplements by cardiologists, dermatologists and orthopedists: report of a survey

Version: 1 Date: 11 November 2010

Reviewer: Jeffrey B Blumberg

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript is a concise description of the results of an online survey of the personal use of and professional recommendations regarding dietary supplements by 900 cardiologists, dermatologists, and orthopedists. This a clearly written and straightforward report with full disclosure of competing interests. While the manuscript is acceptable for publication, the following comments are offered:

P 2, ln 52 – Rather than describe the first result as “over half”, this sentence should begin “Fifty-seven percent of cardiologists…”

P 2, ln 57 – Delete “fully” as a descriptor of “72% of cardiologists”.

P 4, ln 71 – Reference is made to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. While the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans have not been finalized but should be within the next month, it may be worthwhile noting the position of this document with regard to the use of dietary supplements.

P 5, ln 104 – The choice of a sample size of 300 for each medical specialty should be justified based on past work and/or a power calculation.

P 8, ln 172 – Delete “only” as a descriptor of “25% of cardiologists”.

P 9, ln 186 and P 10, ln 211 – Provide as a table the list of 29 reasons from which the participants could choose for using or recommending dietary supplements.

P 10 and Table 2 – Were the participants surveyed as to which dietary supplements they recommended for specific indications? For example, did the dermatologists recommending supplements for “skin, hair, nails” and “anti-aging” indicate what supplements they were recommending?

P13, ln 294 – The use of “substantial” to describe levels of supplement use by healthcare professionals in other studies should be quantified, e.g., “substantial levels of usage (from xx to yy%)”.

P14, ln 306 – This sentence appears to suggest a temporal relationship between supplement use and other healthy habits, i.e. people who take supplements subsequently adopt proactive health behaviors. If this is the case, then cite references supporting this statement or make clear that supplement use is simply
associated with the practice of a healthy lifestyle.

P 15, In 326-332 – This material appears to be more appropriate to the Methods section.

P 16, In 344 – Delete “very likely” and/or quantify this descriptor, e.g. by noting “physician specialists are very likely (xx to yy%) to use dietary supplements…”

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.