Reviewer's report

Title: Buyer beware? Does the information provided with herbal products available over the counter enable safe use?

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Reviewer: Parisa Aslani

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Buyer Beware? Does the information provided with herbal products available over the counter enable safe use?

General Comments:
This is a very well written article and easy to read and follow. However, there is a formatting issue with the tables (Table 2-5) which hides some information in the first column of the tables. Could this issue be rectified so that the results could be viewed and judged, and an appropriate decision reached?

The research aim has been clearly articulated, and the methods described appear appropriate to address the study aim. However, further detail and better explanation is required in the section on ‘Data extraction and quality assurance’ to clearly show how the data were collected and analysed, as well as how the reliability of the data collection and analysis was determined.

Specific Comments:
Abstract, Results: The authors have stated that there were 51 of 68 products; however, the numbers given add up to 53. Could this be corrected.

Results: Regulatory category: It is not clear whether the three regulatory categories were derived from information presented on the CAM container labels or written information, or from an external source. Please clarify.

Results: Key points of safety information: This is where the results are lacking. Whilst it is important to know how many pieces of information have been included, it is even more important and essential to know what information has been included. The authors should complete the results presented in this manuscript by including information about what actual safety information (side effects, interactions and precautions) have been included and hence those that have not been included in the written information and on the labels of the CAMs studied.

Conclusions: Perhaps the authors could also conclude by suggesting future on-going monitoring of written information and labels for CAMs, as well as standardisation of the information provided with CAMs.

Could the authors check their references for completeness, for example, Ref 20, are there only three authors?
Typographical errors:
Abstract: Results: Line 1: Remove ‘of’ after (75%).

Background: Paragraph 4: It should be Complementary and Alternative Medicines. Could this be corrected throughout the text.

Background: Paragraph 5: 2nd Dot Point: Is its St John’s Wort or St John’s wort (lower case)? There is inconsistency in the text of the manuscript.

Background: Registered traditional herbal medicine: Line 6: change ‘purchased’ to ‘purchaser’.

Data extraction: Line 4: change ‘thorough’ to ‘through’

Results: Information provided: line 4: should read: “One of the these leaflets…”

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.