Reviewer’s report

Title: Quality of reporting of trials abstracts needs to be improved: a survey of four leading Chinese medical journals of traditional Chinese medicine

Version: 1 Date: 8 April 2010

Reviewer: Phil Wiffen

Reviewer’s report:

Minor essential revision

• The authors state that they want to assess and compare the reporting quality of both Chinese and English abstracts in four leading TCM journals. It is not clear why they chose TCN as opposed to other Chinese journals and why only four. It is not clear if these are the only ones indexed in Medline- if so that is reasonable.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

• The methods are straightforward and what would be expected for this type of project

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

• The results are simple number counts with a percentage this seems to be a reasonable approach

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

• I am not sure that this is relevant for this type of study

Discretionary revision

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

• Yes though the overall result is that the journals don’t do very well, this is not a surprise. There is some attempt to place these results in context but it is still hard to know whether Chinese journals are worse, the same as or better than say western complementary medicine journals.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

• Generally this has been done. Suggest that the term ‘Consort’ is added to the title.

7. Is the writing acceptable?

• Yes generally well written. Would benefit from some copy editing.

Discretionary revision

General comment
It would be valuable to formally inform the TCM journal editors of this work and seek to improve the current situation by discussion. While this paper will be of some interest to western readers, this data should also be published in China.

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

**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'