Reviewer’s report

Title: Why women choose compounded bioidentical hormone therapy: Lessons from a qualitative study of menopausal decision-making

Version: 0 Date: 05 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Louisa Velentzis

Reviewer’s report:

Please include all comments for the authors in this box rather than uploading your report as an attachment. Please only upload as attachments annotated versions of manuscripts, graphs, supporting materials or other aspects of your report which cannot be included in a text format.

This is a detailed and comprehensive account and analysis of beliefs and motivations of current and ex-users of compounded bioidentical hormone therapy users. This area of research is still in its infancy and studies like these are necessary for shedding more light on what drives a number of women to use CBHT, despite a fairly united and opposing front from clinicians and regulatory or other bodies, based on safety concerns.

I have some minor corrections/suggestions as listed below:

1. Although I realise this is a qualitative piece of research, due to the small number of participants, it would be informative to provide a summary table that listed for each participant the following information, if available: age, current or past CBHT user, occupation, duration of use of CBHT, type of CBHT used, who prescribed them the CBHT, whether the participant was a past user of conventional HT, past user of herbal supplements and for past users of CBHT the reason for stopping. The authors could include any additional details they have which they think are relevant.

2. There is inconsistent characterisation of participants throughout the manuscript. First name, age and occupation I believe suffice. Readers could easily refer to the table for further information.

3. Controls: strictly speaking including controls in this study would have meant interviewing women who had never used CBHT. However, since the aim of the study was to characterise the motivations of CBHT use, I understand why the authors did not include these women. It would have been interesting however, to compare the views of women in the larger ethnographic study on some comparable topics, e.g. their clinical experience.

4. I wonder whether the authors asked women about their sources of information on CBHT. Although this is mentioned on a couple of occasions, it would be informative to present that information for all women, if available, maybe in the summary table or elsewhere.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal