Reviewer's report

Title: Excessive Use of dangerous forms of Alternative medicine by the Saudi patients with neurological disorders: skin cauterization and bloodletting

Version: 3 Date: 21 June 2014

Reviewer: tonia onyeka

Reviewer's report:

A. Discretionary Revisions: None

B. Minor Essential Revisions:
   1. ‘The data was collected, between February 27, 2013 and April 1, 2013, through an interview-administered questionnaire whiles the patients in the waiting area of the neurology clinic’. What is ‘whiles’?
   2. ‘Most of the sample (73.6%) resided in Riyadh, the capital of KSA’. Change to 'the respondents'. Apply throughout.
   3. The authors should stick to use of one terminology for alternative medicine i.e. complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Please apply throughout.

C. Major Compulsory Revisions:
   1. The title does not convey the results obtained in the final work. Little was said about the practices of cupping/bloodletting and skin cauterization in this manuscript. Hence the title should be re-written to reflect the actual work done with regards to the forms of CAM e.g. “Pattern of CAM use by adult Saudi patients with neurological disorders”.
   2. Concerning the statement in the questionnaire to identify health practices, CAM and traditional medicine are both written as options while orthodox or conventional medicine is omitted. I am of the opinion that traditional medicine is a form of CAM and therefore that question loses its relevance.
   3. The age ranges are too broad and therefore any significant findings as related to a specific age group may be lost. This in turn would reduce the rigor of the study.
   4. From the questionnaire: “In your point of view do you think that alternative medicine can cure diseases, traditional medicine is unable for treatment.” – This statement is ambiguous and the tense used is wrong (see underlined portion).
   5. ‘The utilization of alternative medicine (AM) is highly prevalent world-wide’. Reference.
   6. ‘In a study conducted at the out-patient pediatric clinic of a major university hospital in Saudi Arabia, Jan et al. showed that children with neurological disorder is a risk factor for the use of AM (8). However, no date exist on the frequency of AM utilization in the adult Saudi patients with neurological
disorders’. – wrong tenses; ?? no date exist

7. ‘In relation to the perception assessment, 64% of the patients think that AM can cure diseases that modern medicine is unable to and 87% of respondents believe AM is not associated with any complications’.

8. ‘In our study, the neurology patients were recruited from only one center in Riyadh which is a metropolitan city and the capital of the country. Hence, they might not represent the adult neurology patient of Saudi Arabia such as those residing in rural areas. However, 25% of the patients enrolled in the study come from outside of Riyadh so it is highly possible that the sample actually represents the adult Saudi patients with neurological disorder’. This statement is highly contradictory. The authors should explain what they mean by this.

9. No definite conclusion was arrived at on completion of this study. Can the authors give a conclusion?

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'