Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of potential drug-herb interactions among a group of Palestinian patients with chronic diseases

Version: 2

Date: 3 November 2014

Reviewer: Patrick Wilson

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1) Regarding the prevalence of chronic diseases, were these based on self-report or obtained from medical records? My impression is that it was from self-report. Given that these patients were attending their primary healthcare center, why was a physician-confirmed diagnosis not used?
2) pg 4 lines 92-93. Please provide the factors that were used to calculate sample size requirements (power, expected effect sizes, etc).
3) For table 3, were there any specific diseases (diabetes, hypertension) that were associated with drug-herb interactions?
4) pg 5 lines 103-104. Both of the references that were used to evaluate possible interactions [10, 11] are approximately 10 years old. Is there not a major risk of using possibly outdated reference guides for the evaluation of drug-herb interactions?
5) It appears that one of your calculations is incorrect. 237 of 400 were herb users = 59.3%, not 52.9%. This needs to be addressed at several points in the manuscript.
6) I would suggest that the discussion section include more specifics regarding the potential negative effects of the drug-herb interactions observed in this study (e.g. liver damage, heart arrhythmia, etc).

Minor Essential Revisions
1) The following areas should be revised to ensure proper grammar: pg 2 line 42 (interaction should be interactions); pg 3 lines 65 and 73 (you previously had used term drug-herb, but now you have switched to herb-drug; need to be consistent); pg 3 line 69 (interaction should be interactions); pg 4 line 79 (has should be have and missing a period after [7-9]); pg 4 line 80 (drug herbal should be drug-herb); pg 5 line 114 (year should be years); pg 6 line 128 (interaction should be interactions and potential should be capitalized); pg 6 line 135 (uses should be users and form should be from); pg 7 line 144 and 145 (interaction and medication should be interactions and medications); pg 7 line 153 (medicines should be medicine); pg 7 line 158 (interaction was should be interactions were); pg 7 line 162 (missing a period after medications); pg 7 line 163 (consider switching this increases to which could increase); pg 8 line 170 (consider switching consumers, of to to consumers, and of); pg 8 line 173 (consumer
should be consumers;); pg 8 line 175 (consider switching tell to disclose); pg 8 line 181 (uses should be users and form should be from); pg 8 line 186 (uses should be use); pg 9 line 196 (representable should be representative); pg 9 line 197 (delete a); pg 9 line 201 (delete the).

2) Regarding citations, please address the following: pg 8 line 169 (need a numerical citation to accompany Goldstein et al.); pg 3 line 63 (would include citation to back up claim that herbs are safer than pharmaceutical items); pg 9 line 191-192 (citation needed for claim).

3) I would reword the following sentences for clarity: pg 3 lines 63-64; pg 3 lines 68-71; pg 4 line 83 (in addition to patients' counseling...); pg 7 158-161.

4) Your conclusion should include qualifying language about the specific population studied. (example: Among Palestinian patients attending primary healthcare centers, a substantial proportion failed to disclose to their doctors....)

5) pg 7 line 157: regarding your statement, "herbs used by patients in this study are relatively safe." Can you say this for sure or are drug-herb interactions largely understudied, which prevents strong conclusions to be made regarding safety?

6) Was the t-test paired or unpaired?

Discretionary Revisions

1) I would suggest including evaluation of the data for normality.

**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