Author’s response to reviews

Title: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CULTURALLY EMBEDDED FACTORS IN COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE USE

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Author’s response to reviews:

Yi Mou (Reviewer 1):

The current form of manuscript has met my satisfaction after the revision. Please carefully proofread the manuscript throughout and correct those minor errors, such as "the Other".

We were pleased to see that Reviewer 1 is satisfied with the manuscript. As for the only comment, the text was proofread by a native speaker; the example which was given by Reviewer 1 ("the Other") was not a spelling error. The "O" is capitalized in many disciplines (such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology) to denote the other human being as a constituting factor in the self-image of a person (the Other is both dissimilar to and the same as the Self). Capitalization was employed as early as the 1950's by Simone de Beauvoir, or for a more recent example: Van Wolputte S. Hang on to your self: of bodies, embodiment, and selves. Ann. Rev. Anthropol. 2004;33:251–269.

Irene Kretchy (Reviewer 2):

General comments: This is a study of relevance for primary healthcare in Hungary other countries where complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use is widespread. The cultural perspective to this paper is great. The study was well organized and the paper well presented. There are however issues that need to be addressed and these have been indicated below.

We were pleased to see the initial comments of Reviewer 2. We are thankful for the comments provided and will address the specific recommendations below.

Abstract: Results
"In order to avoid the dichotomization of "push and pull factors," results were structured along
milestones of the patient journey" - Where these also based on in-depth interviews conducted
with patients (N = 9) and practitioners (N=9)? The clarification need to be made.

Thank you for requesting this clarification, it has been made in the abstract, see new version
lines: 22-3.

Abstract: Conclusion

There is a disconnect between the results and the conclusion sections. The conclusions should be
based on the results obtained.

Conclusion: The conclusion is too long. The authors should just concentrate on the main findings
and the implications of such observations.

We fully agree with Reviewer 2, thank you for that comment! We have modified the Conclusion
in both the abstract (old version: lines 34-36 deleted) and the article itself (old version: lines 520-
529 deleted).

Background

1. Correct the first sentence of the background - Although a myriad of surveys support
complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is becoming increasingly popular
among European and North American populations

Corrected; thank you for catching that!

2. The authors should indicate the source of this information about Ghana - but 70% of the
Ghana population cannot afford Western medicine

Added (it was the same source as in the first part of the sentence).

3. The background is generally silent on CULTURALLY EMBEDDED FACTORS IN
COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE USE as it pertains to other
studies. The authors did well by indicating what has generally been reported on CAM and
Traditional Chinese Medicine in other countries but are unable to clearly indicate what
exact cultural issues exist.

Thank you for this insight! We have added a paragraph in the background section (new version
lines: 105-112).
Methods

1. Please move the information on the mean age to the results section.

   Moved; see new version lines: 233-236

2. The section on the Sociocultural context of research is very lengthy. Some of the information should be moved to the background and specific information relating to the methodology should be stated.

   Modified; see “Sociocultural context of research” section and new version lines: 113-136

3. The methods section need to include details of the in-depth interviews as well. So far emphasis has been on the patient observation. The authors should include information on the interview guide and the observation checklist.

   Added; see new version lines: 153-162

Results

It is not clear from the results which information was obtained from the patient observation, from the interviews and that from the practitioners.

   Information added, see new version lines: 235-236

Discussion

The authors did a good work by discussing their findings in relation to pertinent literature. However, the narratives on the exact quotations from the interviews should be moved to the results section and not be part of the discussions.

This is the one comment we do not fully agree with. General practice does in fact place most quotations in the results section, but there are many qualitative studies that employ quotations in the discussion section as well, in order to provide empirical evidence for or illustrations of the material discussed there. If possible, we respectfully ask for some lenience concerning this one recommendation, subscribing to it would require major revision as most of our case elaborations are in the discussion section. Some examples by BMC CAM authors and minimal quotation usage in the discussion section as well:


We would like to thank both Reviewers for their excellent, constructive remarks! We hope the Reviewers and the Committee will find our revised version satisfactory.