Reviewer’s report

Title: What motivates new, established and long-term users of herbal medicine: Is there more than push and pull?

Version: 0 Date: 04 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Frauke Musial

Reviewer’s report:

This is a nicely written paper which tackles important aspects of the use of herbal medicine in Germany. The representative survey conducted and presented here, elucidates reasons for and factors determining the use of herbal medicine on a sound data base. The statistical analyses performed appear to be appropriate and well conducted. The method section is comprehensive as is the results section. The presentation of alpha-level (significance level) and the presentation of p-values appears to be somewhat inconsistent (please see my remarks in the PDF-file).

The introduction refers to the relevant literature and provides a good bases for the understanding of the research question, while the discussion is appropriate and the authors show sufficient distance and criticism of their own work. The cited literature is appropriate.

Overall, this is a very nice piece of work!

In order to lift this well written paper based on a nicely conducted study on an even higher level, I would like to see two additional aspects discussed:

1) Is it possible, that there is an overall shift from «going to a practitioner», such as a homeopath or an acupuncturist, towards the use of herbal medicine? Especially the new group of users, who have a lower education and socioeconomic status and experience their health factors poor may simply not have the financial ressources to go to a practitioner. Nonetheless, they may decide for herbal medicine because it is the only CAM entity they can afford.

2) Not all herbal medicine is safe, not only for reasons of the herb itself or the quality of its preparation. Some herbs may interact with conventional drugs, such as e.g. for cardiovascular disorders. Please include safety aspects of the use of herbal medicine, in particular as self medication in your manuscript.

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.

Yes

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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

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