Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence, and health- and sociodemographic associations for visits to traditional and complementary medical providers in the seventh survey of the Tromsø Study

Version: 3 Date: 25 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Carolina Ung

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

I appreciate your great efforts in addressing the comments I made. However, there are areas which warrant further improvement/clarification.

1. With my earlier comments about "Re-organizing of the structure of the Background will improve the readability of this", it was only meant to point out that the flow of Background could be improved so that the future readers would be clear about what you would like them to understand about the background of this study. For instance, in the current version, the Background consists of 11 paragraphs which might be confusing to follow from one to another (as listed below). Regrouping and summarizing the Background is needed to improve the readability of this part of the manuscript. Some suggestions for the authors to consider: integrating paragraph (1-3), (4-6), (8-10), (7 and 11) to condense the Background into 4 paragraphs.

(1) Brief introduction of patient-centered health care

(2) Brief introduction of culturally sensitive health care

(3) Brief introduction of patient-centered culturally sensitive health care

(4) Sami population in Norway and their rights to healthcare

(5) Northern Norway being multi-cultural

(6) Population make-up in Tromsø
(7) Roles of TM providers in providing support; Use of TM in Norway

(8) TM practice in Northern Norway

(9) CM use in Norway

(10) Regulation of TM and CM in Norway

(11) Characteristics of TM or CM users; Non-disclosure; Study objective

2. In the Discussion, it might be better to indicate the overall prevalence of use of TM and/or CM first: "We found that 10% of the participants had visited T&CM providers; 2.5% had visited TM providers and 8.5% had consulted CM providers. One percent had been in contact with both TM and CM providers during a 12-month period" followed by the statements about the concurrent use of conventional medicine among the TM and CM users: "This study demonstrates that more than 90% of the participants who had seen T&CM providers employed parallel health care modalities by adding conventional medicine to their use of T&CM….

3. In the Discussion, to ensure the patients receive PC-CSHC, the authors suggested that it is important for the conventional health care personnel to recognize the user of T&CM among their patients. Is it also important for the TM or CM practitioners to recognize the use of conventional medicine among their patients too? And is it also important for TM practitioners to recognize the concurrent use of CM and vice versa?

4. In the Discussion, it says "When patients want to see T&CM providers within a hospital or a nursing home setting, they might need other facilities than those provided for conventional health care." Does that mean T&CM providers are allowed to provide care to patients in a hospital or a nursing home setting?

5. In the Discussion, "The lower use of TM found in the present study may be due to the fact that the participants were recruited outside a health care setting of mostly healthy individuals, that only visits to TM providers were asked for, and the 12 month prevalence of use compared to the lifetime use in the other studies" needs revision and clarification.

6. In the Discussion, whether the argument "The lower number of participants who reported to have visited TM providers compared to CM providers, and the higher ages, and poorer health reported by those who had seen TM providers, indicate that visits to TM providers are made when illness occurs" was supported by the findings of this study remained questionable.

7. In the Discussion, it says "to facilitate for visits from T&CM providers in hospitals and nursing homes, to open-minded welcome T&CM providers… are ways of providing PC-CSHC for patients who wish to add T&CM to their treatment program" Is it allowed by the law to provide T&CM health services in hospitals and nursing homes?
8. In the Conclusion, it says "This study indicates that those who visit TM providers differ substantially from those who visit CM providers, also in urban settings. Those who had seen TM providers tended to be older, to claim that religion was more important to them to have lower education, and poorer health and financial situation than those who had seen CM providers" Suggest to remove it as this major finding has been reported in the Results and repeated in the Discussion.

9. The manuscript needs further thorough editing prior to publication to improve the language and to correct any grammatical errors (e.g. in the Abstract, there should be a coma between "provider" and "8.5%" in "We found that 2.5% of the total sample had seen a TM provider 8.5% had seen a CM provider whereas 1% had visited both a TM and a CM provider during a 12-month period."

**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.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
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Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
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