

Reviewer's report

Title: A Pilot Study on How Homeopathy is Represented in Conventional and CAM Peer Reviewed Journals

Version: 1 **Date:** 22 March 2005

Reviewer: Katja Schmidt

Reviewer's report:

General

I very much enjoyed reading this submitted manuscript. The authors have identified an interesting research topic (publication bias) and found a systematic way to explore it in the field of CAM compared with that of conventional medicine.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

No major compulsory revisions needed.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

See below.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Title (see below) regarding "pilot" study; also on page 2, first paragraph, line 12 ("pilot")
2. Page 2, second paragraph, line 1 "is there a reference to this statement?"
3. Page 2, second paragraph, line 5 - "struggled to gain legitimacy in the medical establishment" "this is mainly due to the lack of or number of negative scientific rigorous clinical trials.
4. Page 3, Review articles, second paragraph, line 7 "Others merely raise the point that [?] and provide an opposing perspective. " sentence incomplete
5. Page 4, discussion, second paragraph, line 4. Comment: Additionally, advocates of CAM may not want to publish a negative trial and so it gets locked up and forgotten in people's desks?

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The research question is not new as other research groups have done similar observations (see references below). However, it is nevertheless important and well defined.

Pittler MH, Abbot NC, Harkness EF, Ernst E. Location bias in controlled clinical trials of complementary / alternative therapies. J Clin Epidem 2000;53:485-89.

Schmidt K, Pittler MH, Ernst E. A profile of journals of complementary and alternative medicine. Swiss Medical Weekly 2001;131:588-91.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Yes, the methods chosen by the researchers are appropriate for this type of work.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

Yes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

I disagree with the title " and would not call it "pilot study", especially since the researchers don't speak of a main or follow-up study that is planned. I would rather call it a "systematic review". The abstract is very clear and precise.

7. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests