Reviewer’s report

Title: Characteristics and job satisfaction of general practitioners using Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in Germany - is there a pattern?

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Reviewer: Amir Shmueli

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Review of Joos et al. “Characteristics and job satisfaction of general practitioners using CAM in Germany – Is there a pattern?”

Major comments
1. The analysis has several methodological flaws:
   a. Only CAM use was explored in a multivariate analysis (Table 3). It is not clear from the table which additional covariates were included.
   b. Job satisfaction, which is a focal variable in the analysis, was not examined in a multivariate setting so the conclusion relating differences to GP using CAM or not is not convincing.
   c. From Table 4, the only significant differences in satisfaction are in “freedom of working method” and “consultation time”. The conclusions about differences in job satisfaction between CAM users GPs and non-users are not supported by the data presented on p. 6.
2. Furthermore, in most of the analysis, cause and effect are mixed, or both originate from a third confounding variable. This results in The Discussion on p. 7 being trivial and obvious:
   a. From Table 1 it is clear that “Special qualification for CAM” is almost identical with “GP CAM user”. Regressing CAM use on the ‘qualification” as in Table 3 is a misspecification.
   b. The same holds true for CAM use and “Own CAM use” and “attitude towards CAM”. These variables are too close conceptually to use one as a predictor of the other (Table 3).
   c. In Table 2, the % of privately insured patients is related to CAM use. The higher % in the practice of CAM users is obvious, since most of CAM users patients are privately insured.
3. Unclear Table entries:
   a. The bold type in Table 5 is not explained. If it is used to mark significant differences, this is an error since the mean difference and the 95% CI are not measured in the same direction.
   b. % figures are missing in Table 1 (e.g. Gender).
4. It seems that CAM user GPs were more cooperative with the survey than
non-users. Their share in the sample was 72% (p.5) while their share in the population is about 60% (p.3). This introduces a selection and sampling biases which are not accounted for.

5. It is not clear why the availability of an ultrasound was taken as an indicator and for what. One could expect that CAM users will use less technology than CAM non-users.

6. Attitude was coded into 3 categories without providing the full distribution nor giving the reasons to do that.

7. The authors make an interesting observation on p. 10 – 40% of CAM users GPS have no additional CAM qualification, but leave this point unexplored. This could be examined with the data.

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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'