

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EDITOR:

Thank you for the most recent issue of the *Journal of Nurse-Midwifery* (JNM 44:3, May/June 1999), which reviews several alternative and complementary therapies currently available in women's health. Since the ACNM's Core Competencies for Midwifery Practice require that CNMs and CMs apply "management techniques and therapeutics, including complementary therapies, to facilitate health," JNM provides an excellent starting place for midwives to explore and learn more about these modalities.

Although it is difficult to be comprehensive in detailing each and every therapy in the limited space available, an excellent overview was presented. The extensive resource list included in the appendices will be most helpful in pursuing further study in these areas. It was especially appreciated that homeopaths such as Patty Brennan were asked to contribute. She has served as a resource in this area for many years.

The entire journal was excellent. Thank you again for this important work.

Linda Stobinski-Johnson, CNM
Chapter Chair, Southeast Michigan
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EDITOR:

I congratulate you and the editorial board on the recent publication of the Home Study Program on Complementary and Alternative Therapies for Women: Implications for Midwifery Practice (JNM 44:2, March/April 1999). I taught a course on the use of alternative therapies, particularly herbs, this past spring and found this issue to be a much-needed addition to our knowledge base and understanding regarding complementary therapies. I have also conducted research regarding midwives' knowledge and use of herbs and was concerned to see how little we really know about the use of such therapies. Many in the study operated from a "don't ask/don't tell" perspective. This seems to be based on a fear that we really do not have access to good resources regarding the use of herbs or other alternative therapies. Furthermore, scientific data on the use of many of these types of therapies have been lacking. The Journal is to be commended (and Dr. Jeanne Raisler, in particular, for her coordination of this special issue) for bringing current, well-researched information to practitioners. Of

particular interest was the publication of the prospective study regarding the use of Evening Primrose Oil.

I think this issue of the Journal will assist us as a profession in moving beyond a state of limited knowledge and anecdotal recommendations to an evidence-based approach that will support the addition of complementary therapies as an added option in the services we provide for women. Thank you for this timely and valuable resource.

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EDITOR:

An article I wrote was seriously misrepresented in a paper published in the Journal (JNM 44:3, May/June 1999) by Barbara McFarlin et al. First it misstated my credentials, claiming I was an "herbalist." In fact, at the time of my article's publication I was a licensed naturopathic physician in the state of Washington. Second, McFarlin et al said that my article advocated the use of "blue and black cohosh" for labor stimulation. Nowhere in my article is *Cimicifuga racemosa* (black cohosh) mentioned for any reason. Third, the following statement was falsely attributed to me: "Castor oil taken internally is thought to cause hyperemia of the intestinal tract leading to reflex stimulation of the uterus." My article never mentioned this.

I would like a retraction published in your journal acknowledging that my article was misquoted. My intimate knowledge of the article I wrote gave me a special ability to know that it had been gravely misapplied. I am also led to wonder as to the veracity of citations of other references by the authors of the article.

I suggest you consider including naturopathic physicians who are also licensed midwives among your peer reviewers when articles discussing the use of herbs during pregnancy come up, to help avoid such problems; I'm sure they would be eager to help. I have read numerous helpful articles in your journal over the years and continue to look toward it as an authoritative source of information in the field of nurse-midwifery.

Eric Yarnell, ND
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