

Reviewer's report

Title: Balloon Kyphoplasty in malignant spinal fractures: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis.

Version: 2 Date: 12 March 2009

Reviewer: Lidia García-Pérez

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Abstract: Delete "square" after I2.
2. Background: The phrase "Due to the fragility..." is too long. I recommend dividing it in two statements. (2nd paragraph, 2nd phrase)
3. Methods: Clarify what "IME" is for non Spanish readers. For example, write "IME (Índice Médico Español)" instead of "IME" alone. (1st paragraph, 2nd line)
4. Results:
 - 4.1. Commas instead of semi-colons in the second phrase of Results (1st paragraph) and in the last phrase of the second paragraph of Results (just before Efficacy outcomes).
 - 4.2. Functional Capacity: Write "(Table 3)" at the end of the phrase, not in the middle.
 - 4.3. Quality of Life: Cite "Table 2" instead of "Table 3".
 - 4.4. Cement Leaks: Colon after I2, that is, "I2: 0%".
 - 4.5. Clinical Complications: The information about complications found by Kose are different in the text and in Table 2, that is, the text shows "two patients... wound infection and temporary respiratory difficulties..." and Table 2 shows "1 balloon rupture...".
5. Discussion: The phrase "To our knowledge, there are no..." is too long. I recommend dividing it in two statements. (last paragraph)
6. Table 1:
 - 6.1. Show reference citations next to the Study, "Lieberman 2003 (25)", for example. It helps to the reading.
 - 6.2. Kose's row: Colons after BKP and VP, that is "BKP: 18/22" and "VP: 16/26".
 - 6.3. Vrionis' row, Estimated age of VF: ¿"10" " means "10 months" perhaps?
 - 6.4. Abbreviations: Add VP, VF and BKP, and their meanings, to the list of abbreviations.
7. Table 2:
 - 7.1. Show reference citations next to the Study, "Lieberman 2003 (25)", for example.

- 7.2. There are some data centered in some cells.
 - 7.3. I think you should delete "ODI" in the Pflugmacher 2008's row and write it in the head of the column, that is, "Functional capacity, ODI", for example.
 - 7.4. Fournery's row: Delete ° (grades symbol) or show it for the rest of studies.
 - 7.5. Take care of use of commas and semi-colons; I recommend substitute all commas with semi-colons in order to show the data more homogenous.
 - 7.6. Write "p=0.001" or "p=.001" but do not mix both ways because it's confuse, in my opinion.
 - 7.7. Abbreviations: Add NS, ODI and VCF, and their meanings, to the list of abbreviations.
8. Table 3:
- 8.1. Show reference citations in a new column or in the "Studies providing data" column: "(25,33,34)", for example. It helps to the reading.
 - 8.2. Take care of use of commas and semi-colons.
 - 8.3. Write "0.20" or ".20" but do not mix both ways because it's confuse.
 - 8.4. Write "Kyphotic deformity" (as in the text) next to "Cobb angle" in order to help the readers to relate easily the text and the data in the table.
 - 8.5. Abbreviations: Add CI and its meaning to the list of abbreviations.

Discretionary Revisions:

9. Background: Clarify the meaning of PMMA. (last phrase of 2nd paragraph)
10. Methods: The reference 23 does not seem "recent". Perhaps the authors could cite other reference. (last phrase of Methods)
11. Results, Functional Capacity: Show that the Index decreases when the disability decreases. Perhaps it is obvious but the readers thank usually this kind of clarification, in my opinion.
12. Table 2: I would move Kyphotic angle column before Vertebral height column and New VCF column before Clinical complications column, with the aim of keep the rank they appear in the text.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.