Reviewer's report

Title: Using a single question to assess physical activity in older adults: A reliability and validity study

Version: 1 Date: 19 October 2011

Reviewer: Mette Aadahl

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:
The question posed by the authors is well defined, but it does not cover all that is actually evaluated in the manuscript. Validation and test-retest reliability testing of questions and questionnaires is generally a good idea, but I fail to see the rationale behind the apparent comparison of validity and reliability of the two PA questions (absolute and relative PA) as they represent fundamentally different dimensions or aspects of PA. Also the comparison of binary and ordinal forms of both questions are not justified in the background.

In the background section (leading up to and justifying the research question) only 1 article is referenced! Another 4 references appear at the very end of the background section, but I suggest the authors add references to support their statements in the background section.

I recommend the authors re-write the background section taking into account the comments above.

General comments:
Overall the methods are appropriate and relatively well described. The chosen criteria or validation measures seem sound and statistical methods appropriate (although multiple correlation coefficients are presented).

The data seem sound, considering that they were not collected for this particular study and the validation study was not planned a priori.

The manuscript adheres to relevant standards for reporting and data deposition and the results and conclusion seems reasonably balanced and adequately supported by the data. Also the authors state limitations of the study clearly.

The manuscript is generally well written.

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

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.