Reviewer's report

Title: Motor Function in Parkinson's Disease and Supranuclear Palsy: Simultaneous Factor Analysis of a Clinical Scale in Several Populations

Version: 1 Date: 29 January 2006

Reviewer: Wim E J Weber

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors describe a statistical exercise to analyse factors in the UPDRS-III scale across three patient groups: Parkinson's disease patients with (294) and without medication (200), and 175 patients with progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP).

They conclude that the UPDRS-III provides a valid assessment of motor function independent of disease status, thus implying a clinical utility beyond Parkinson's disease patients.

This conclusion seems important, but I must admit that my knowledge of statistical methods is not sufficient to judge the validity of this conclusion.

I would strongly recommend statistical advice on this paper.

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

1. The abstract is not well-written. It is not clear which question the authors which to answer (from the background section I understand that they want to find out whether the UPDRS-III may be used to assess patients with diseases other than PD).

2. The abstract Methods section is not clear: numbers of patients and the method by which the authors selected them should be mentioned.

3. The ref. are not formatted according to the BMC series of journals.

4. The background section should be drastically shortened, and written more clearly for the "methodologically challenged".

5. The same applies to the discussion section.

5. The English should be improved, as there are lots of grammar and syntax errors.

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'