Reviewer's report

Title: Recruiting for a multicentre randomised controlled trial in Bell's Palsy: A case study

Version: 1 Date: 23 January 2007

Reviewer: Carien Beurskens

Reviewer's report:

General

Interesting paper, not only for recruiting patients with Bell’s palsy, but the design is also applicable for patients with other diseases, which relatively infrequently occur.

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

1. page 4, first line
   Concerning the end point, what was the time for this point and what was the rationale to use House-Brackmann III

2. page 6, last but one line
   480 or 470 (see page 5, last line) patients?

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

1. in general:
   - please beware of backspaces, sometimes no backspace, sometimes 2 backspaces (also applicable for the references)
   - all abbreviations in full

2. page 3, second paragraph
   Full stop is missing.

3. page 3, third paragraph, third line
   most must be must

4. page 5, last line, first paragraph
   relationship must be relationship

5. page 5, last line
   314 patient must be 314 patients

6. page 9, second paragraph, second line
   SPPIRe or SPPIRE (see also page 10, first line)

7. page 10, third paragraph, last line
   full stop

8. page 10, last paragraph, first line
   GP, General practitioners or General Practitioners, please be consistent

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. What if patients had a Bell’s palsy in their previous medical history, are these patients excluded? The literature reports namely a recurrence of 3 – 11 % of the patients with a Bell’s palsy (Devriese et all, 1990, Clin. Otolaryngol. 15, 15-27).
2. This article also shows a significant difference in incidence concerning seasonal onset of the paralysis!
3. The incidence in Scotland (25-35 per 100 000) seems to be higher than in other parts of Europe and the USA (20 per 100 000) (Adour, Peiterson, Devriese), is there is possible reason for that fact?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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