Reviewer’s report

Title: Is the Timed Up and Go test a useful predictor of risk of falls in community dwelling older adults: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1
Date: 22 October 2013

Reviewer: Nancye May Peel

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Discretionary Revisions
1. In the Abstract and Results of the Sensitivity Analysis (page 15) the authors suggest that the “TUG test was found to be more useful at ruling in rather than ruling out falls in individuals classified as high risk”. I wonder if the terms “ruling in” and “ruling out” are the correct terminology for describing a test with higher specificity than sensitivity.

2. Could the authors justify why they included reference [42] Garber et al, 2010 in the systematic review. In this study, data on the TUG were reported for the assessment at 24 months and data on falls collected for the 6 months prior to the TUG measure. Thus the study does not meet the requirements of a prospective cohort where the index test (TUG) preceded the outcome of interest (fall) (as stated on page 17).

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Background, last paragraph, page 6-7.
“The most recent systematic review reported that the pooled mean difference between fallers and non-fallers depended on the baseline functional status of the cohort of patients under investigation. In essence, there was a mean difference of 0.63 seconds (95% CI 0.14–1.12 seconds) in the performance of the TUG for high-functioning versus a difference of 3.59 seconds (95% CI =2.18–4.99 seconds) for those in institutional settings [31].”


2. References page 24. References [29] and [31] are the same. Also references [15] and [44] are the same.

3. Should the first study in Table 1 be Greene et al 2012 not 2011 [reference 54]?

4. “Data” is plural and should always be followed by a verb in the plural eg “Data were extracted….”; not “Data was extracted….”. This should be corrected throughout the document.

5. Page 17, 2nd paragraph, last sentence, should the reference be [54] not [4]?

6. Page 19, last paragraph, first sentence. Can the authors reference the statement that “recent studies have shown that the rate of falling remains at
approximately 30%” as there has been a generational change of 25 years since Tinetti’s publication [1].

7. Page 24 reference [35] the year of publication should be “2006” not “200”.

8. Minor edits include:
   • remove “the” before “both” in the second last sentence, page 10;
   • page 12 “..leaving 25 twenty five articles” remove “twenty five”;
   • page 16, 2nd paragraph, 4th sentence, insert “the” before “study”;
   • page 16, 2nd paragraph, 5th sentence, “less falls” should be “fewer falls”;
   • page 17, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence, “The authors reported that that predictive accuracy….. “ should be “The authors reported that the predictive accuracy….. “;
   • check the punctuation around the word ‘however” in the middle of a sentence

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The text description for study identification (page 12) should be reconciled with Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram. The text states “Five hundred and forty nine were then excluded based on title or abstract.” Figure 1 shows 550 records excluded based on title or abstract.

   The text states “Of the remaining 106 articles, 81 were excluded after reading the full text leaving 25 twenty five articles.” Figure 1 shows 105 full test articles assessed and after 81 were excluded, 24 articles were included.

2. In the Results section, page 12, the 24 studies included in the review and from which data were extracted for Table 1 (supplementary material) are referenced as 13-14, 16-18, 25, 39-55, and one unpublished by ? Thomas. Subsequently under Study Quality (pages 12 and 13) the overall study quality is assessed on 25 studies, including studies not previously referenced eg [15], [56], [57], [58] and [59]. I previously noted under point 2, Minor Essential Revisions that references [15] and [44] are the same.

   It would be helpful if the studies from which data were extracted for the review were referenced in Table 1, including all studies referenced where there are several publications on the one population. eg Okumiya et al, 1998 [43] and Okumiya et al, 1999 [59].

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.