Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of resistance and functional-skills training on habitual activity and constipation among older adults living in long-term care facilities: a randomized controlled trial [ISRCTN87177281]

Version: 3 Date: 27 April 2006

Reviewer: Nico Van Meeteren

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors have given a more detailed insight in their study. In my first report I considered that Paw et al forgot to mention several aspects of their trial. Now I got somewhat puzzeled by the answers and responses on the former review-report. And thus I wonder what would happen when the readers of the BMC Geriatrics will have finished the paper if it was to be published. Would they get puzzeled as well? Would they be thinking the following: "This study of Paw et al presented here concerns a small part of a larger study, it was underpowered and the authors were obviously not interested in the progression due to the training and even not in the changes in the food- and water intake. Was this sort of a pilot-study then?"

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

Based on these puzzeling idees I would like to urge the authors to add a paragraph in the discussion to explain the to the readers the combination of the details of the design and measurements chosen here. Otherwise, I would like to urge Paw et al to add a paragraph concerning the internal validity of their study and to give detailed insight into the changes they would like to make when repeating this study in the future.

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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 of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'