Author's response to reviews

Title: How to improve walking, balance and social participation following stroke: a comparison of the long term effects of two walking aids - canes and an orthosis TheraTogs - on the recovery of gait following acute stroke. A study protocol for a multi-centre, single blind, randomised control trial.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find the following changes made to the submitted manuscript as requested in your mail of the 16.07.2011:

1. The abstract has been structured into the separate sections headed Background, Methods/Design, Discussion. (The section titled results has therefore been removed).

2. The current trial registration number and the trial registry have been correctly inserted at the end of the abstract.

3. In order to prove that ethical approval has been obtained two acceptance letters of ethical approval from 1) The Ethics Commission of Basel and 2) The Ethics Commission of Luzern have been up- loaded together with this cover letter.

4. No external funding has been awarded by a major funding body and therefore has not been declared. A research prize was awarded as already documented in the first submission under the acknowledgements and this has not been changed.

5. TheraTogs orthoses have been donated for the research by the manufacturer although the manufacturer has no influence on the research process, the collection and analysis of data, or the publication of results. This information has been added to the “Competing interests” section of the manuscript. No members of the research team are funded or benefit in any way from the manufacturer.

We hope that these changes have clarified the points you requested and that the manuscript may be submitted for review. Thank you for your assistance and for the time taken to consider this research protocol.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Maguire.