Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of Cardiovascular Exercise Early After Stroke: A Meta-Analysis

Version: 3  Date: 25 April 2012

Reviewer: Ada Tang

Reviewer's report:

SUMMARY - REVISION 1

The authors have conscientiously and thoroughly addressed each point raised in the original review. The flow and continuity of the manuscript is much improved, and many areas clarified. The new section “Clinical Relevance” is a nice addition to the paper.

There are only a few minor suggestions to consider:

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

1. There remain a few places throughout the manuscript where a sentence begins with a number, and this should be spelled out. One example (out of several) is in Results / Results of individual studies: First sentence should be “Three studies …”, rather than “3 studies …”

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1. Analysis: For clarity, could the authors add: “FOR OUTCOMES WHERE SUFFICIENT DATA WAS AVAILABLE, we performed the meta-analysis by computing standardized mean differences …”

2. Results / Synthesis of Results: Again, for clarity, add a statement here clarifying that this synthesis included only the outcomes VO2peak, 6MWT distance and gait speed, where there was sufficient evidence to pool the data

3. Results / Stress test protocol: Last sentence, remove “Basically,”

4. Discussion, para 3: “The strongly-VO2peak-related outcome measure WRpeak …” is awkward. Suggest “WRpeak, which is strongly related to VO2peak, …”

5. Discussion, para 4: Replace “… individuals in the intervention group walked farther than participants without additional cardiovascular training.”

6. Discussion / Future Directions, para 3: Suggest “The ASSESSMENT of aerobic capacity is challenging since there are no standardized evaluation methods” and that future research should seek to establish validated testing protocols in this population

7. Figure captions / Figure 6: Change “6 MinuteS Walk Test” to “6 Minute Walk
Test"

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests