Reviewer's report

Title: Performance on the Frontal Assessment Battery is sensitive to frontal lobe damage in stroke patients

Version: 2 Date: 24 June 2013

Reviewer: Paige Moorhouse

Reviewer's report:

1. Major compulsory revisions: none
2. Minor compulsory revisions:
   a. In the Conclusions section of the abstract, please clarify that "these findings indicate that several FAB scores (including composite and item scores) provide valid measures..."
   b. In the Background section, delete the phrase "in fact"
   c. In the Methods section, please clarify whether psychiatric disease was an exclusion criteria, or whether the population of patients recruited had no history of psychiatric disease.
   d. In the Methods section, Please clarify what is meant by "most patients" in the sentence including the phrase "damage centering on or involving the frontal lobe in most patients". Was frontal lobe involvement an inclusion criteria?
   e. In the description of the FAB tasks, the second sentence under item 2, needs rewording such as "...It is well documented in the neuropsychological literature that frontal lesions tend to decrease verbal fluency, particularly lexical verbal fluency, and that in right handed people, unilateral right frontal lesions are related to the presence of less pronounced, yet noticeable deficits in lexical fluency compared to unilateral left frontal lesions."
   f. In the Results section, replace "amounted to" with "was" in the first sentence.
   g. In the Methods section, more clarification is needed as to how scores were dichotomized. For example, for all FAB item scores, the median score reported in Table 2 is 3, therefore it would appear that any deficits in any item score would be coded as zero. Is this correct? This has particular ramifications for the Results section where the term "failure" is used to describe any scores that were coded as zero. The term "failure" may be misleading as the original publication did not validate individual item scores or provide guidance as to thresholds for "normal" vs "abnormal" scores on test items.
   g. A more detailed discussion of the limitations of these findings in regards to lateralization within the frontal lobes would be helpful to readers. For example, poor composite or item scores could just as easily localize to areas within the left frontal lobe, but the existing data in this manuscript cannot address this, and the single sentence at the end of the discussion does not reflect the magnitude of the implications of this gap in the data.
h. In the first sentence of the 9th paragraph in the discussion, the word "lesions" appears to be missing in the phrase "more sensitive to frontal than nonfrontal and left as opposed..."

3. Discretionary Revisions: none

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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:

I declare that I have no competing interests