Reviewer's report

Title: Validity of the "Drift without pronation" sign in Conversion Disorder.

Version: 2 Date: 7 January 2013

Reviewer: Jon Stone

Reviewer's report:

I was interested to read this study of a clinical sign which is not well described for motor conversion disorder. The authors are absolutely right that these positive signs have acquired a new significance in recent years with the DSM-5 conversion disorder criteria relying on their presence rather than the absence of disease.

This paper is particularly timely since there are no clearly validated signs to positive detect conversion weakness in the arms

The results were impressive, especially the specificity although the authors rightly point out the limitations of non-blinding

The study will certainly prompt me to try out this sign myself in clinical practice

Major revisions

1. The main limitation not discussed is that as well as not being blind to the other clinical signs the patient had, eg Hoovers sign, it may be that the authors, consciously or subconsciously may have used the presence of drift without pronation to make the diagnosis of conversion disorder. This is similar to the lack of blinding bias but a little different and worth highlighting since it's a bias which clearly would affect the results

Minor Revisions

2. In the opening paragraph the authors suggest that the diagnosis of conversion disorder is based on the absence of disease. But since they argue correctly in the next sentence that disease may co-exist, in fact it is not logical to state that the diagnosis of conversion disorder is based on the absence of disease; it is not, it is only based on the presence of inconsistency (which is determined by the signs they mention)

3. How did the authors consider a patient who appeared to pronate initially but then the arm ended up in a supine position? They said that even when slight supination was present that the sign was present. Does that mean the sign was positive even if the forearm was only semi-pronated on resting (eg resting on the ulnar border of the hand?)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'