Reviewer’s report

Title: Arm hand skilled performance in cerebral palsy: activity preferences and their movement components.

Version: 1 Date: 28 January 2014

Reviewer: Maurizio Petrarca

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. The goal of this paper is not clearly addressed. The main aims are redefined in different paragraphs. Probably the reader could improve its understanding if the main aim was resumed as reported at page 15, as an attempt to identify “a set of standardized test situations for upper extremity skill research may be fine-tuned, relative to a specific research question”. Afterwards, the items listed at the beginning of the discussion paragraph, at page 12, could follow. But this also represent the main limits of this work. Why the main aim needs the definition of the three sub items: a) upper extremity-related ADL children with CP want to improve on, b) movement components constituting these activities, and c) the top-10 most preferred activities in three age groups? This is an assumption of the authors not a demonstrated consequence. The text needs a logical reorganization.

2. The summary of the main aims in the abstract and at page 12 had to be clarified. While the aims defined in the point a) and b) are clear and clinically relevant the point c) sounds ambiguous. High level functional activities is the target of point c). It is interesting the attempt to define the different preferred activities at different age, but the limits of this attempt needs to be declared stronger. The goals change with the individuals development as consequences of social and biological elements that depends in this case not only by the individual attitude, but also by the specific social niche in which he lives and by the personal abilities as consequence of the early damage. From the great variability of activities that children may want to improve and preferred activities, the selection of the item proposed in the paper seems more the results of the selection of the most repeated rather than the most preferred, a local mode with a not specified dispersion, that could differ in a different region.

3. The most preferred goals seem summarized in similar way for the three age groups, the only difference is the leisure for younger and computer using for the older. Both activities mean ‘social activities’ that change their expression form with the age.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Eating, dressing, self-care and computer using goals could be accomplished with a comments on the distinction between primary individual needs and social
demands.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**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