Reviewer's report

Title: Can testing of six individual muscles contribute to the diagnosis in upper limb diseases?

Version: 3 Date: 6 January 2014

Reviewer: Richard Bohannon

Reviewer's report:

The authors address a reasonable research question with practical implications. That said I have a few recommendations:

Mandatory:
1) Note in the Introduction or Discussion that:
   a) others have sought to parsimoniously characterize the status of upper limb muscle strength using indexes of 3 (Motricity Index) or 5 (Motor Index Score) muscle actions. While focused on patients with different problems (ie, stroke & spinal cord injury) I think they should at least be mentioned in passing.
   b) manual muscle testing is notoriously insensitive to strength impairments. Consequently, patients with scores of 5/5 may have impairments of 25% or more.
2) Report on all aspects of validity, not just agreement. Specifically report sensitivity, specificity, + predictive value, and negative predictive value.
3) Use people first language. For example, refer to "patients with upper limb..." rather than "upper limb patients."

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.