Reviewer's report

Title: Finger joint laxity, number of previous pregnancies and pregnancy induced back pain. A cohort study.

Version: 2

Date: 13 December 2013

Reviewer: Nina Vollestad

Reviewer's report:

The revised manuscript is markedly improved in clarity and consistency. Yet, some parts could have been even stronger with a more extensive revision.

Major compulsory revisions

One major concern in my previous comments was the measurement properties of the abduction angle (AA). The authors have included a statement in the discussion that they do not know the measurement error. This is not sufficient to provide a good foundation for how to interpret the data. First, they have four repetitions for their subjects, so they do have the data to provide an analysis of reliability. As the mean values vary somewhat for the whole group, a relatively low reliability is expected. An analysis of the reliability should be done and the results used in their interpretation to enhance the precision of the text. Second, they may also refer to other similar or comparable setups which have published data on test-retest measurements.

Another major concern (previous comment no 4 & 5) relates to the significance of uncertainty (or power), with regard to the estimates shown in Fig 2 (previously Fig 1). The authors have only stated what was done, not how uncertainty of the estimates are important for interpretation and use of this figure. The 20 estimates are based on a model generated from a sample with 16 cases out of 167 subjects. The figure leaves an impression that if you have at least 4 previous pregnancies and 60 degrees AA, then >90% of the women will have postpartum back pain. However, I assume that there is a huge confidence interval around the estimates which is important to recognize when interpreting them. I therefore suggest that 95% confidence limits are added to the figure, or at least are given in the legend. The data on sensitivity and specificity underscores the low ability to use the AA measurement to predict postpartum low back pain.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests