Reviewer’s report

Title: The efficacy of physiotherapy upon shoulder function following axillary dissection in breast cancer, a randomized controlled study

Version: 3 Date: 28 June 2007

Reviewer: Adri C Voogd

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Page 6, line 9: severe physically disabled

Page 6, line 31: Both shoulder function and abduction had increased in the intervention group...

Page 7, line 18: The authors state that the researcher was successfully blinded for treatment allocation in 60% of the cases. What do the authors mean? Just by random guessing there would have been successful blinding in 50% of the cases, so 60% is not a very impressive figure. Maybe it is clearer to state in how many of the 30 patients the treatment was "guessed" correctly by the researcher.

Page 7, line 23: ...with edema commonly occurring ...

Page 8, line 27: "However, the authors suggest that applying ...") It is not clear here to which study the authors are referring. Please mention the authors (Author, et al.).

Page 8, line 30: Please also stress the small sample size as a limitation of the study. For example: "Besides the small sample size, a limitation of the study is the short follow-up ..."

Page 9, line 9: I prefer the put it as follows: "However, Voogd et al. (2003) found that physiotherapy is often prescribed during follow-up, especially among patients with edema and restricted shoulder function."

Page 9, line 12. Please mention which you consider to be the most useful endpoints when evaluating the effects of physiotherapy. For example: "Larger
studies are needed, with at least a 1-year follow-up and using relevant outcome measures, such as ...

Table 1: Put "0" in the cells without any observations, instead of "-".

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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'