Reviewer's report

Title: Use of manual and powered wheelchair in children with cerebral palsy: a population-based study

Version: 3 Date: 11 June 2010

Reviewer: Marjolijn Ketelaar

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript contains a lot of interesting information on wheelchair use in children with cerebral palsy. However, the manuscript in its present form lacks a clear research question, and therefore the direction and the message get lost.

Major Compulsory Revisions
- Please define your research question clear and to-the-point. In the results and figures you present much detail on various ages and various GMFCS levels. There is an overflow of information. Please make clear what is the focus of the manuscript. Since in the present form all ages and all GMFCS-level have been described, the reader gets lost in all information. Please make clear what is of most interest. For example, you could focus on wheelchair use in children with GMFCS level III and IV and focus on differences between indoor and outdoor use in these groups. This could provide very interesting information. Or you could focus in more detail on wheelchair use in children GMFCS level II (a group that is not "expected" to use wheelchairs very often). What is the relation with age of wheelchair use in this subgroup?
- Page 5: Statistical analysis are difficult to follow because there is no relation to the research question. GMFCS is an ordinal scale. What was the analysis you did on the GMFCS? And please make clear what you mean with "subtypes".
- The comparison across ages is difficult because this is not a longitudinal study. In different age groups the distribution of GMFCS-levels is not the same (e.g. age 15 – relative low motor function – high percentage of children GMFCS levels IV and V). This means that you should be very careful in your conclusions with respect to age (page 8 and page 12)
- If the research question is more focused, the discussion-session could become more focused as well. What can we learn from these results? And what are the limitations? Etc.

Minor revisions
- Page 1: I would strongly advice to use the consensus definition of cerebral palsy as described by Rosenbaum et al (Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 2007).
- Page 4: I suppose the question on wheelchair use in fact were 4 different questions? ((1) use manual indoors, (2) use manual outdoors, (3) use
battery-powered indoors, and (4) use battery-powered outdoors).

- Reference list needs some attention – in some references names are missing.

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

**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.