Reviewer's report

Title: The Effect of Functional Splinting on Mild Dysplastic Hips after Walking Onset

Version: 3 Date: 11 February 2005

Reviewer: Stuart Weinstein

Reviewer's report:

General

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

1.) Page 1, paragraph 1: The authors in referring to pathoanatomy of developmental dysplasia of the hip should provide references such as the article by Ponseti in JBJS.

2.) Page 1, paragraph 2: Reference number three isn’t really the natural history of the condition. Different references that better support this including those by Wedge and Weinstein provide better support for this statement.

3.) Page 1, paragraph 3: Ultrasound playing a pivotal role in early diagnosis depends on what part of the world one practices in. This probably is true in Europe but is not true in the United States.

4.) Page 1, paragraph 3: The author refers to class IIb hips requiring treatment. What is inter and inter rater reliability? Also the authors refer to reference 15, but this reference came about before the Graf Classification so therefore the recommendation of the use of a device in this article should not referenced, as it doesn’t apply to the Graf Classification.

5.) Page 1, paragraph 4: When the authors refer to Graf IIb hips needing treatment, how do we know this for sure? What is the evidence? If there is evidence please provide a reference.

6.) Page 1, paragraph 5: When the authors talk about the difficulties with children using the splint, this reviewer agrees with the authors’ perceptions, but are there references to document this?

7.) Page 2, paragraph 2: Was the decision for treatment made solely on the parents’ preferences? Were any of the patients started in treatment and then discontinued i.e., had a crossover between groups??

8.) Page 2, paragraph 5: The authors state that all patients were treated before 8 months of age, yet in paragraph 1 on this page, some of the patients weren’t even diagnosed until 18 months of age. Please explain.

9.) Page 3, paragraph 2: The authors state that the concept of continuous abduction in growing children with mild dysplastic hip symptoms was introduced previously by whom? Please provide a reference. For the sentence ending with abduction for cases of late hip dysplasia, please provide a reference. Another question that arises is why were ultrasounds done in the first place? Were these children in a routine screening or were there physical findings, which suggested that they may have hip dysplasia?
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

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

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.