Reviewer's report

Title: Participation in everyday activities and quality of life in pre-teenage children living with cerebral palsy in South West Ireland.

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Reviewer: Jan Willem W Gorter

Reviewer's report:

This is an paper about the participation and quality of life of school aged children aged 8 to 12 years in Ireland. The authors aim to address three questions: 1. the impact of severity of CP on quality of life, 2. the impact of severity of CP on participation and 3. the comparison of participation in children with CP and comparable peers without CP.

Although the subject is very timely and relevant I do have some major concerns. The paper is not easy to read (partly due to the structure of paragraphs and sentences, typo's) and not easy to interpret the data in the way they are presented.

Background: the authors do cite the recently published findings on participation and quality of life in children with CP. However, the authors are not very clear to what extent this study, which is a subset of the Sparcle study, adds to the literature. This should be clearly stated and discussed later on in the discussion. Also the definition of CP should be updated (Rosenbaum et al 2007).

Methods: for both instruments, and for the kidscreen in particular, the authors should mention which version was used in THIS study (self report versus parent report) and how the psychometric characteristics are of the used version. For the EAQ the total score should be given (14 x 5 = 70?)to the reader.

Many impairments are measured and give in Table 1 for descriptive purposes. The authors however do not use all information in their analysis to answer research question 1 and 2. Only the combined GMFCS levels (I-III versus IV and V) are used in combination with IQ level (< 70, versus > 70).

Results: The analysis and the results could be better presented in relation to the research questions. For example Table 2 shows both the extent to which severity has an impact on participation but also shows the comparison between kids with CP and kids without CP.

Discussion: The strengths and weaknesses of this study should be discussed. Also recent literature should be used to discuss the findings from this study. The finding that children with CP have a good quality of life is not new (sparcle, asqme study) but reveals new insights. It would be interesting to look at the similarities and differences between the findings in Ireland and the overall picture in Sparcle ( I noticed that there are some differences).

Other comments:
I think that mild, moderate and severe - although well defined in this study - should be avoided as much as possible. It is better to be more specific about the definitions. Also the use of impairments and activity limitations needs attention. The GMFCS is a classification system that classifies a child in terms of motor performance.

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

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