Reviewer's report

Title: The relationship between facial skeletal class and expert-rated interpersonal skill: an epidemiological survey on young Italian adults

Version: Date: 3 July 2006

Reviewer: Raymond Edler

General

Whilst the authors have accommodated some of the comments in the first report, some important issues remain.

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

In particular, there are two key problems:

1. The conclusions relating to female "sensitivities" (sub-conscious) about their jaw relationship and their ability / inability to foster good relationships, is based on such very small numbers; i.e. just 6 class 2 females and 6 class 3 were "NS". I think a statistician should give a view on this. It seems to me that despite being statistically significant, the number of subjects involved is too small to permit the conclusions drawn.

2. The "degree" of skeletal class, i.e. 1, or 3, is not given. The 6 class 3 females judged to be "NS" might all have only just been class 3, i.e. very mild? Also the fact that the vertical dimension has been ignored is a derisory deficiency, particularly with such small numbers in the class 2 and 3 female "NS" group.

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

Abstract: reference is still made to "latero-lateral rx", instead of lateral cephalogram. Re the last sentence; as already indicated, this conclusion is unjustified. All one might do is to conclude the findings are interesting and would justify further investigation.

Introduction: Is there no evidence at all in the literature to indicate that a class 1 jaw relationship is the most attractive? The two references given do not show this. The Jefferson paper (1996) quoted is simply a personal view, not a scientific study and does not in any case refer specifically to class 1 relationships. The other paper (Michiels and Sather, 1994) simply reports that: "Profiles with increased vertical features or convex or Class II tendency profiles were judged as being the most unattractive". Thus, nothing on class 1 relationships.

Subjects and Methods: The exact meaning of Skeletal classes 1, 2 and 3 have not been explained to a non-orthodontic audience. On the other hand to a non-psychiatrist, it is still not fully clear how "NS" in managing relationships is supposed to relate to the subject's jaw relationship. Is lack of success due to lack of self-confidence and is this what the tests established? What about "over-confident" individuals? How would they rate in the test?

Results: The data in the first paragraph should be as a Table.

Discussion: The "strong" association referred to, is un-justified.
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: Yes

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.