Reviewer’s report

Title: On Your Feet: Protocol for a Randomised Controlled Trial to compare the effects of moderate intensity pole walking and regular walking on physical and psychosocial health in older adults

Version: 2 Date: 30 January 2014

Reviewer: Sylvia Titze

Reviewer’s report:

The authors describe the protocol of a planned randomized controlled trial. The aim of the trial is the comparison of the effects of two different interventions – pole walking and regular walking - after a 12-week intervention period among older adults.

The structure of the paper, the description of the design, the necessary measures to run the study and the measurements of the variables are clear and sufficiently described in order to replicate the study.

I am looking forward reading about the results of the study and whether the participants prefer one of the two interventions.

Minor essential revisions

1. In the introduction the paper from Kukkonen-Harjula et al. (2007). Self-guided brisk walking training with or without poles: a randomized-controlled trial in middle-aged women.Scand J Med Sci Sports, 17, 316-323. should be included because they compared walking and pole walking groups and the age of the participating women was 50 to 60 years.

2. Page 6: End of introduction: The variables in the last sentence are vague. The terms “functional fitness” or “physical function” and “physical activity as well as sitting” would be more informative.

3. Why is social support not part of wellbeing?

4. Page 7, first paragraph. It is indicated that two of the questions are “phone questions”. If you call the participants why don’t you ask all the questions by telephone? Please clarify.

5. Page 7, Randomization: Is there an age-limit or age range?

6. Page 9, first paragraph: Please also provide the figures of the metric system

7. Page 9, Behaviour: Please indicate whether the accelerometer will be worn: around the hip or the wrist.

8. Page 10, Last sentence of “self reported PA”: Please indicate that the categorization is “per week”.

9. Page 11: One idea would be to make “social support” to become a
sub-category of wellbeing.

10. Page 13, Discussion: Pain is a sub-category of wellbeing and should not be listed separately.

11. Page 14, last paragraph: In the discussion it is unusual to raise a new topic which has not been introduced in the introduction. I suggest to already include a short paragraph about falls and poles making feel the older people safer with regard to falls.

Spelling

1. Page 5, in the middle of the second paragraph: ...is more difficult for older people than Exerstriding.

2. Page 5, same line: ...Figard-Fabre et al. found... (full stop after “al”

3. Page 5, last paragraph: “psycho-social” or “psychosocial “ (e.g. abstract) please decide which spelling fits better.

4. Page 8, outcome measures: Shouldn’t it be “…behaviour “ # instead of behavioural (PA levels…)?

5. Page 14, second line and six lines below: Space before [50] and space before [8]

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'