Reviewer's report

Title: Combined effects of functionally-oriented exercise regimens and nutritional supplementation on both the institutionalised and free-living frail elderly (double-blind, randomised clinical trial)

Version: 3 Date: 13 August 2008

Reviewer: Michelle Miller

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions
1. I am still unable to locate any information on intention to treat or power calculation.

2. It is likely many readers of this journal will not be familiar with the specifics of the public health system in Poland. Suggest some of the key aspects be summarised to provide readers with more context.

3. Agree that adherence is a fundamental issues but to my knowledge there is no evidence to suggest that Physiotherapists facilitate greater levels of adherence than assistants. Workforce implications of this program are considerable globally and should not be ignored.

4. The authors response acknowledges the real limitations of the nutrition intervention. Some of these details need to be included in the manuscript as this limitation is important for readers to understand when interpreting the findings.

5. I find it difficult to understand how a decision would be made not to stratify based on overall homogeneity of the respective groups. This information would not have been known until after the study had been performed. There is evidence to suggest that those in different settings and/or different cognitive ability, adhere to nutrition and exercise regimes differently.

6. It would be useful to make reference to the EU Directive No 1999/21/EC for readers outside of the EU.

7. I believe a better reference could be sourced to justify that 25.2kg/m2 is in the slightly overweight category rather than relying on the NOVARTIS BMI calculator. In fact, 25.2kg/m2 would put these participants, given their age, in the desirable range.

8. The information on accountability is important and should be included.

9. I disagree that the composition of the nutritional supplement is not important. Reference to the website is warranted if it provides details of both supplements.

Discretionary Revisions/Comments
1. The dietary intake information would be very interesting and so I look forward to hearing about these findings.

2. It is a great achievement that adherence to nutrition supplements was 100%.
(Incidentally, I am not reviewing the Bunout et al paper, and had I been I certainly would have asked the same questions about adherence).

**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