Reviewer's report

Title: The influence of initial spasticity in young children (18 months of age) with Cerebral Palsy on their development in gross motor function

Version: 1 Date: 17 February 2009

Reviewer: Sam Pierce

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:
1) None.

Minor essential revisions

Introduction:
1) Page 3, paragraph 2: I would acknowledge that there are alternate definitions of spasticity that have been proposed (such as the SPASM group's definition).
2) Page 3, final paragraph: I don't think that this paragraph & figure is essential to the manuscript. I would remove this and go right into your purpose statement which you have set up nicely from your introduction.

Methods:
1) Page 5, last paragraph: Table 1 was never referred to in your description of subjects.
2) Page 8, Paragraph 1, sentence 2: It appears that the sentence was cut off since it leads with the reference number as the subject of the sentence.

Statistical analysis:
1) You note that you did a linear regression analysis but never report the results of the regression. Also, you would need to establish that your Spasticity Total Score is Interval level data to do a linear regression unless you are doing a non-parametric version of some sort.

Results:
1) I believe that the data from the children with hemiplegia should be removed from the analysis since the data from their "unaffected"/less affected limb would have been included in Total Spasticity Score. By including these children, you may have invalidated your results. You could choose not to do this but then you should discuss your rationale for including the children with hemiplegia in your analysis (which would probably include difficulty with making the dx in young children, the data which shows the "unaffected" side is really not unaffected, etc) and discuss how the results of your study may have been affected by including this data in your analysis.

Discussion:
1) Page 11: I feel you need to acknowledge that you have no data on the reliability of the Spasticity Total Score with young children with CP.

2) Page 12, Paragraph 1: How do you know that you have an adequate sample size for a correlative design? If you did a power analysis, please report it.

References:
1) The Boyd reference (19) was incorrect since it came from a supplement.

**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, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.