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: 20 February 2009

Reviewer: Gunnar Hagglund

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Se comments below regarding “influence” and “relationship”

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Se comments below regarding the statistical methods

3. Are the data sound?
Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Se comments below regarding “influence” and “relationship”

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

This is a well designed study, and the subject is of clinical importance. I have, however, three major comments:

1. The study analyses the correlation between spasticity and the development of
gross motor function. A significant correlation does not mean that a higher level of spasticity is the cause of impaired improvement in gross motor function, it could be a coincidence. I would suggest changing the title to “The relationship (or association) between initial spasticity...” In the last paragraph of the Background I would accordingly suggest changing the word “influence” to “relationship”.

2. In Statistical methods the authors writes that a linear regression analysis was performed. I think it is correct to do so, but the result of the analysis is not presented. The results of the statistical analysis is only presented as Rho

3. In the statistical analysis the GMFM Change Score was used as dependent variable and the Spasticity Total Score as independent variable. It seems more correct to use the Spasticity Total Score as dependent variable, and I think this calculation should be done and presented.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests