Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of a training program after surgically treated ankle fracture: A prospective randomised controlled trial

Version: 2 Date: 23 June 2009

Reviewer: Michel P. J. van den Bekerom

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors,

You wrote a high quality study on a relevant topic in the treatment of ankle fractures. I have some minor concerns before publication is possible. I have stated my comments below and I hope you will improve your manuscript with these.

kind regards,

Introduction

Ankle fractures are not one of the most common injuries in the lower extremity, ankle fractures are one of the most common fractures of the lower extremity. (major)

Stability of the ankle mortise more than dislocation is an indication for operative treatment. (major)

The authors state: To our knowledge no randomised controlled trials have been performed evaluating the effect of a standardised training program after plaster removal. Probably they are right but I think they should mention the article of Moseley (2005 Arch Phys Med Rehabil). (Discretionary)

Methods

Can the authors provide some information about what they did with the deltoid ligament and syndesmotic injury? Antibiotics pre-operatively? Thrombosis prophylaxis? (minor)

Maybe it is described in the protocol but where is the sample size calculation? (major)

Discussion

I agree with the authors that there is no beneficial effect above the age of 40 years. In the other patient group (below the age of 40 years) there were significant differences in 3 of the nine outcome measures, so in the majority of the outcome measures there is no difference.

In my opinion the conclusion should be: Because only 3 of the 9 outcome
measures show a difference, a very small beneficial effect can be expected from an additional standardised individually suited training program. (major)

Another recommendation for future research could be a cost effectiveness analyses because the differences are small between the two groups. (discretionary)

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'