Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The relationship between chronic type III acromioclavicular joint dislocation and cervical spine symptoms

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 25 June 2009

**Reviewer:** John Stites

**Reviewer’s report:**

The relationship between chronic type III acromioclavicular joint dislocation and cervical spine symptoms.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. I found it interesting and informative and believe it is appropriate for publication. I do have a few comments and suggestions.

I have a primary concern and a number of secondary suggestions.

**Major compulsory revision**

I have one primary concern that does not appear to be addressed in the manuscript and I believe it is important to consider.

How do the authors assure that there was no injury to the cervical spine at the time of the injury to the A/C joint? Is it not possible that a minor concurrent whiplash injury occurred at the same time?

Additionally, does the use of the conservative treatment (sling or figure-eight splint for 30 to 40 days) influence the cervical lordosis?

I strongly suspect that, if factored in, the cervical biomechanical changes and symptoms may be parallel processes as opposed to there being a relationship between the A/C separation and the cervical spine findings as described in the manuscript.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

I do not think the conclusion can be drawn that there is a relationship between the neck pain and loss of lordosis noted in the A/C dislocation group based on this study. Perhaps the NPQ scores noted in the chronic dislocation group are due to an altered pain threshold often seen in patients with chronic conditions. Perhaps the altered lordosis is a byproduct of the chosen therapy for this group. If the Spearman’s Rho outcomes were better explained I might feel more comfortable with the conclusion. What is meant by “inverse” correlation? What are the r values?

This manuscript should be edited for readability if it is to be published in English. Phrasing, word choice and grammar are often awkward.
Notable space, including charts, is dedicated to the levels of osteophyte formation in the two groups. Since this information is not a defined goal of the study, I wonder if this amount of copy is warranted.

I hope the authors find my comments helpful in refining their manuscript.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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.