Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Low back pain in elite and semi-elite Australian football codes: a cross-sectional survey of football (soccer), Australian-Rules, rugby league, rugby union and non-athletic controls

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 3 December 2008

**Reviewer:** Susan Picavet

**Reviewer’s report:**

This is a well documented and well written paper which adds findings and discussion to the interesting research field of physical activity, sports and LBP.

I have the following remarks:

- Some studies show that LBP is related to socio-economic status (SES) – LBP being higher in lower SES. Can anything be said on the SES or education of the semi-elite codes? (Because the control group is of higher education) In addition: is the control group of students with an average age of 24(!) - Already rather old-not a selective group?

- Please add some information on the difference between elite and semi-elite, are elite-players full-time paid – i.e. it is a job - and are semi-elite also paid or not? Do the semi-elite players have a job outside the football? Depending on the role of the football in their lives and carriers of course affect the potential effect of LBP.

- How was the study presented to the clubs and players – as a LBP survey or as a general health survey? Were the responses of the players confidential?

- I miss prevalences of LBP expressed as %. How many of the players had no LBP, moderate LBP of severe LBP. (should be in table 1)

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

**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