Author's response to reviews

Title: Thoracic spine pain in the general population: Prevalence, incidence and associated factors in children, adolescents and adults. A systematic review

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dr Melissa Norton MD  
The Editor in Chief  
*BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*  

Dear Dr Norton

Thoracic spine pain is a common presentation in primary healthcare practice, yet compared to pain experienced in the lumbar and cervical spine, little attention has been focussed towards the epidemiology of thoracic spine pain. This probably reflects the belief that the outcomes of thoracic spine pain are less significant than low back and neck pain. However, an emerging body of evidence suggests this is not the case, particularly in youth.

Currently, there are a range of epidemiological studies in the literature which report characteristics of thoracic spine pain. However, to our knowledge, no systematic review has been conducted to evaluate the evidence base and synthesise the information relating to this condition from childhood to adulthood.

The current submission describes a comprehensive systematic review conducted by colleagues and myself. For the first time, it provides a detailed summary of the prevalence, incidence and factors associated with thoracic spine pain from childhood to adulthood in the general population and highlights where future work should be directed. Importantly the data presented provide a source of normative information to enable meaningful comparisons to clinical subgroups. Moreover, the data presented substantiate common clinical anecdotes concerning the high prevalence and burden of thoracic spine pain.

I believe this review paper would be of value to your readership and would be grateful if you would consider this paper for publication in *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*. It contributes to the scarce knowledge base concerning thoracic spine dysfunction. Neither the manuscript, nor any of its parts, has been submitted elsewhere for publication.

Sincerely

Andrew Briggs  
Chief Author.