Reviewer’s report

Title: Neck/shoulder pain in adolescents is not related to the level or nature of physical activity or type of sedentary activity in an Australian pregnancy cohort

Version: 1 Date: 28 May 2009

Reviewer: Alice Kongsted

Reviewer’s report:

This is a cross-sectional analysis of data from 643 adolescents aimed at examining associations between physical activity and neck/shoulder pain (NSP). Very detailed, but self-reported, information regarding physical activity was obtained. The article is well-written and the large amount of data is clearly presented.

The research question is well defined and the background is clear. The methods are appropriate as long as it is realized that causation cannot be investigated, which was discussed by the authors. Another important limitation of the method is the risk of bias due to subjects choosing or altering activities because of their NSP-status. The authors conclude that physical and sedentary activity is not related to NSP. Taking the above mentioned limitations into account, this is a more firm conclusion than supported by the study. This trial shows that self-reported activity registered during one week was not associated with retrospectively reported NSP during lifetime or during the month preceding participation in the study.

I suggest that the conclusion is modified both in the abstract and in the text so that it is truly supported by the study (Revision 1). Further, the potential problems with the cross-sectional design in relation to the risk of activity-levels being a result of NSP should be considered in the discussion (Revision 2).

I suggest that the word “self-reported” is entered in the title before “physical activity” (Revision 3)

Page 6, line 5: I suggest that the percentage of the 14-years cohort is added, that is “924 adolescents (38 % of the 14-years cohort) participated..” (Revision 4)

I would like to know when the MARCA-reporting was made in relation to the questionnaire about NSP (revision 5), and how the METs were calculated/was the METs based on some standardized values or..? (page 7 – revision 6).

The paragraph p. 6 “A comparison of the cohort with the Western .... To the Finnish birth cohort” does not make sense to me. Was this a distinctive cohort because it was included from a specialist hospital or was generalisable to the background population? (Revision 7)

Other papers that the authors build upon are properly cited.

• Discretionary Revisions

Revision 4
• Minor Essential Revisions
  Revisions 3, 5, 6, 7

• Major Compulsory Revisions
  Revisions 1 + 2

**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