Reviewer's report

Title: Effectiveness of physiotherapy exercise following hip arthroplasty for osteoarthritis: a systematic review of clinical trials.

Version: 1 Date: 2 February 2009

Reviewer: Michael Hurley

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes the findings of a review of physiotherapy exercises following hip arthroplasty.

It is a well structured paper of a well designed systematic review. The Background and Methods are clearly described, the search strategy is excellent and the authors have gone to great lengths to ensure that they have captured the relevant studies.

I have one or two comments.

Discretionary Revisions

My main comment is that overall, the writing style is cumbersome, tedious, to read and the lacks sparkle. This is especially true of the Results section. I realise that systematic reviews are not the most exciting topics in the world to do or read, and generating excitement is not their primary main aim. However, you can and must keep the reader’s attention by making it as easy as possible to glean the results from the review. I don’t think the authors have given enough consideration to the presentation of their findings, which lets down their excellent work and means that the review will not stay long in the readers mind – should they battle to understand it. The results could be summarised better in tables.

There are many heterogeneous outcome measures reported. This is not surprising but couldn’t Effect Sizes have been calculated and reported? In addition, it may be worth commenting on more “forcefully” on questionable relevance of some of the outcomes (i.e. walking speed – of academic interest) used in previous reports so that researchers start to think a bit more about relevant outcomes (i.e. function, pain, quality of life – more patient focused) when designing trials.

The references are cited inconsistently sometimes giving the author date and bibliographic number, sometimes just author and number. I think it should be consistent and probably just author and reference number.

On Page 9 “private communicate” would be better as “personal communication”.

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