Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 12 May 2009

Reviewer: Kåre Birger Hagen

Reviewer's report:

I have considered the authors response and can accept some of their explanations for not following my advices. However, after reconsider the manuscript I strongly disagree with the authors on two essential points.

Firstly, within group analyses for this particular patient population are not only dubious but directly misleading. Total hip arthroplasty is one of the most successful interventions in the medical history. By considering within group changes the effect of the surgical procedure is falsely attributed to the postoperative treatment. One can simply not answer the research question this review poses without comparing the changes to what happen in the control group who does not receive that particular intervention.

Secondly, I do not accept that quality of reporting and ‘risk of bias’ can not be distinguished. There is lot of checklists for assessing ‘risk of bias’ and there is agreement in the research community that these two phenomena should not be messed up. I think the authors should consult Mike Clark again on this point.

In conclusion, the readers of this review will ask two essential questions:
-What are the effects of physiotherapy exercise following hip arthroplasty?
-Can I trust the results?

As the review stands now none of these questions have been answered!

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.