Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Outcomes of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders: A Survey Among Physical Therapists in the State of Kuwait.

Version: 3 Date: 5 April 2010

Reviewer: Babatunde Adegoke

Reviewer's report:

General comment: The authors have attended to most of the revisions suggested by my first review and this has impacted positively on the quality of the article. However, a number of issues still need to be attended to.

Minor essential revisions

Abstract
1. Pg 2 Line 3: Change the word “incidence” to “prevalence”.
2. Pg 2 Line 4: Change “is to determine” to “was to determine”.
3. Pg 2 Line 17: Change “not affected” to “not significantly affected”.

Background
4. Pg 3 Line 17: Delete the word “the” before “neck”.
5. Pg 3 Line 21-22: Recast the sentence reading “The findings could----“as “The findings from the study could help identify the overall prevalence of WMSDs-----“
6. Pg 5 Line 2: Change “Three hundred questionnaires were distributed” to “Three hundred copies of the questionnaire were” since you administered only one questionnaire in the study.
7. Pg 5 Line 5: Change “The completed questionnaires were collected” to “The completed copies of the questionnaire were collected”.
8. Pg 5 Line 18: Recast sentence starting as “Thus,” to read “Thus, only data from 212 participants were used to calculate prevalence rates”

Prevalence of WMSDs
9. Pg 6 Line 8: Change “1-year” to “one year”.
10. Pg 6 Line 10, 12, 14 & 17: Introduce the word “significantly” before “associated” to show that you were talking statistically.
11. Pg 6 Line 19: Change “not correlated” to “not significantly associated”.
12. Pg 7 Line 1: Change “not associated” to “not significantly associated”.

Outcome of WMSDs
13. Recast the title to read “Impact of WMSDs on participants’ work” since outcome was not investigated in the study.
Prevalence rate and characteristics of WMSDs

14. Pg 8 Line 17: Change “1-year” to “one year”

15. Pg 8 Line 20,23: Delete “Table 5” from the text. Reference to table should be restricted to the result section.

Demographics, work settings and exercise habits

16. Pg 9 Line 13-14: Change “increased incident” to “higher prevalence”

17. Pg 9 Line 16: Change “was associated” to “was significantly associated”

18. Pg 9 Line 18: Change “This age –to- LBP relationship” to “This association between age and LBP”

19. Pg 10 Line 1: Change “low” to “lower”

20. Pg 10 Line 2: Change “in older age group” to “in our study’s older age groups”

21. Pg 10 Line 3: Change “not associated” to “not significantly associated”

22. Pg 10 Line 10: Change “not associated” to “not significantly associated”

Conclusion

23. Pg 12 Line 6: Change “The availability and early access” to “The availability of and early access”

Major compulsory revisions

24. Sampling technique: It is still not clear the sampling technique employed in the study.

Pg 4 Line 8: Participants were randomly selected.

Pg 5 Line 2: Questionnaire was distributed randomly to participants.

Pg 11 Line 12-13: Convenience sampling was cited as one of the study’s limitations.

The authors need to reconcile the sampling technique used in the study as presented under participants, procedure and limitation.

What do the researchers mean by “Three hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed randomly to the participants?” Did they distribute the questionnaire randomly or distribute to randomly selected participants. If the participants employed random sampling, which type did they use?

Results

Pg 5 Line 18-19: What exactly does the statement “No question was missing more than 5% of the responses” mean? Please recast for clarity and better understanding.

Prevalence rate and characteristics of WMSDs

25. Pg 8 Line 10-11: Please cite some literatures that have linked orthopaedic manual therapy technique to WMSDs among physical therapists to justify the inference concerning physical therapists in Kuwait.
WMSDs’ impact on work

26. There was some degree of disparity between what was presented under results and what was inferred under discussion concerning the impact of WMSDs on work. Although majority of the participants did not make changes in their work habit or take sick leave, this cannot be interpreted to mean that work duties were not affected by WMSDs or that physical therapists in this study reported no changes in their work habits. This is especially so because the data on WMSDs’ impact on work was not subjected to inferential statistical analysis.

Table 5

27. It is not clear how ns and percentages reported on the table were obtained. For instance while perhaps 75 participants reported zero sick leave due to neck pain, 79 reported sick leave of 0 day. Why the difference? To worsen the situation, the numbers of participants with WMSDs in the different parts of the body (Table 2) are different for the total figures presented on Table 5. For instance, though only 38 participants had WMSDs in the neck (Table 2), the total figure under this heading in Table 5 is 88. Please reconcile the figures on this table and make it clearer how you obtained the figures and percentages that were cited.

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.