Reviewer's report

**Title:** The influence of knee osteoarthritis on the quality of life and lower extremity function in elderly Koreans: a cross-sectional community study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 14 March 2010

**Reviewer:** Willemijn Henrieke van der Laan

**Reviewer's report:**

**General remarks:**
The article by Kim et al. is a clearly written article, but leaves me with the question what we need to learn from the data found in this study. The finding that the presence of tibiofemoral osteoarthritis affects quality of life is not surprising and as such does not add to our knowledge on osteoarthritis. The gender differences found in this study are far more intriguing. What mechanism is responsible for the gender difference? What does this mean for the interpretation of population studies on OA?

This article has the potential to be of clear interest to clinicians and researchers in the field of OA if these questions are addressed.

**Major Compulsory Revisions:**
none

**Minor Essential Revisions:**
1. The research question is well-defined. However the gender differences found in this study (in accordance with previous Asian studies) seems to me to be an equally important question. In its current formulation this is stated as a secondary question. I advise to put it as a primary question and to discuss the findings in such way that we can take lessons out of these findings. Why is tibiofemoral OA more prevalent in women in Asia in contrast with European and US studies? Why do women have worse scores than men regardless of the presence of tibiofemoral OA? Is occupation a factor? Or culture? Obesity? Co-morbidity? Depression? Appreciating the gender differences found in the evaluation of OA using questionnaires and function test, what do we need to consider in future studies?

2. The lack of of lateral radiographs and skyline radiographs to assess patellofemoral OA has been stated as a limitation of the study. However, the relevancy of lateral and skyline radiographs, meaning the difference it may have had on the outcomes of the study is not discussed. Is it possible that Asian women are more likely to have patellofemoral OA and that missing this on the radiographs may explain the gender differences?

**Discretionary Revisions:**
1. I advise to mention the gender differences in the title and to state the main
finding in conclusion in the title: for instance: “Tibiofemoral osteoarthritis affects quality of life in the Korean elderly population, women being more adversely affected than men.”

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.