Reviewer’s report

Title: Effect of an education programme for patients with osteoarthritis in primary care - a randomized controlled trial.

Version: 1 Date: 2 June 2010

Reviewer: Helen French

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have taken previous feedback on board and made changes accordingly. Quality of written English had been improved considerably, but there are still some minor errors, regarding tense and word placement in sentences that require some amendment.

There are still some areas that require attention.

Minor Compulsory Revisions

Abstract: add in that no differences were found in other outcomes in the Results section.

Background: re-order the introduction so that information about a description of patient education comes before the research on its efficacy. The sentence 'In contradiction, Chodosh et al.....' is unclear. what studies in the previous 2 reviews were included? Did both systematic reviews include the exact same studies? In the introduction, second last sentence- 'The programme has been developed....' just needs some rewording. Suggest the following-'The programme has been developed by physiotherapists and occupational therapists in primary health and includes information on exercise and self-management'

Methods: page 5- use SOLEO and SOLEC abbreviations the first time you use the full names, approx 3/4 way down the page, rather than the last sentence on the same page. Poor ordering of sentences in this section. Keep all information regarding a particular measure together. At present, the sentence 'To measure balance..' is sitting in the middle of information regarding bipedal rising. The sentence 'Bipedal rising, single-leg standing, SOLEO and one-legged jump HAVE BEEN tested for reliability. Suggest remove 'single-leg standing' from this sentence as you refer to it as SOLEO and SOLEC everywhere else in paper.

Statistics- why did you power on an outcome that may not be used with all patients i.e. patients who only have hand OA. Was EUROQOL not the PRIMARY outcome measure? Providing the Standard deviation, without the mean/clinically relevant difference for some of those outcomes is meaningless in power calculation.

Were data normally distributed? as ANOVA was used. State company name and location of SPSS software.

Discussion: The limitations of the study takes up over half of the discussion and it is important that these limitations are identified as previously advised by
reviewers. However, it does concern me that discussion of these limitation requires so much space, I think this is an indication of the quality of the study. The fact that only 2 of approx 14 measures were significant would also warrant some concern.

Are these results clinically meaningful. Although the authors clarified how many patients were able to do chair rising from 48 cm, they did not really explain why this is a limitation as advised in previous reviews. EQ5D is mentioned as being less sensitive to change than other measures, do you mean other QOL measures. If so, then insert the word 'QOL' into that sentence.

Table 1: unclear what you mean by bandage? do you mean splinting? use alternative word.

Figure 1: Box on 'did not come to follow-up' Suggest reword to 'lost to follow-up' Can you give breakdown of reasons?

Table 1: the OA location breakdown and coding underneath table is confusing and unclear.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests