Reviewer's report

Title: Nordic Walking in the treatment of chronic low back pain patients. A single blind randomized clinical trial.

Version: 2 Date: 25 August 2009

Reviewer: Rahman Shiri

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions
Sick leave, medication use and receiving concurrent treatment are not continuous outcomes (Page 10, paragraph 3).

Patients with chronic back pain (± leg pain) were included in this study (Abstract, Methods section). Therefore, chronic low back pain in the title and throughout the paper should be replaced by chronic back pain.

In the following sentence it is unclear what the individual baseline level is? Is it the baseline level of the outcome or the baseline level of expectation?
"The analysis of the influence of expectations on the outcome was performed in a regression model adjusting for individual baseline level."

Borderline significant should be defined in the Methods, Statistical Analyses. For instance, a P < 0.05 was considered statistically significant, while 0.05 < P < 0.1 was borderline significant.

The following sentence needs correction; at 26-week is missing.
.....in the unsupervised NW group the improvement was borderline significant at 52 weeks and non-significant at 11 and 52 weeks (p=0.1480/0.2060/0.0695),

Non-significant p-value is reported with only two decimal digits and very low p-value with <0.001. It is better to report p-value separately after each follow-up than all three p values at the end. It is not necessary to report all significant p values. Back pain improved over time in all three groups. The follow-ups were exactly at 11, 26 and 52 weeks, so using "after 11, 26 or 52 weeks" may not be appropriate (page 13, paragraph 2).

Some linguistic errors in the manuscript could be corrected, e.g.
The proportion of participants who changed from being on sick leave at baseline to not being in sick leave after.

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.