Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of an exercise and manual therapy program on physical impairments, function and quality-of-life in people with osteoporotic vertebral fracture: a randomised, single-blind controlled pilot trial

Version: 2 Date: 8 October 2009

Reviewer: Terence O'Neill

Reviewer's report:

1. General: There are relatively few papers which have looked at the impact of physical therapies on pain and function following vertebral fracture. Despite the relatively small sample size the data suggest a strong effect of exercise and manual therapy on back pain and physical function. The paper is well written. The background is clear and the methods appropriate and well described. The data appear sound, though I would suggest using a non-parametric method for assessment of between group differences. The discussion and conclusions are balanced and the limitations clearly articulated.

2. Major compulsory revisions
None

3. Minor essential revisions
i) There are discrepant data in relation to the number of men. Three men are mentioned in the results section (page 10) while four are implied from Table 2.

ii) The SDs of change (Wk 11-0) for most variables is higher for the intervention than the control arm (table 3). The independent t-test assumes similar variance which does not appear to be the case here. I would suggest that the authors use also non-parametric statistics to look at between group differences.

4. Discretionary revisions
None

What next?
My advise would be to accept after minor essential revisions

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