Reviewers 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

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Reviewer: Meena Sran

Reviewers report:

This is a well written manuscript and the study has a number of strengths, yet there are some important limitations. Most importantly, this was designed as a pilot study, rather than a small-sample investigation supported by an a priori power calculation (Brooks D, Stratford P, Physiotherapy Canada 2009; 61(2):66). As such it seems that it was designed as a rehearsal for a larger investigation.

That said, the results are very impressive regarding the physiotherapy intervention, but given the small sample and lack of power calculation, and the choice not to use the Bonferroni correction in statistical analysis, the conclusions must be tempered, as the authors have done. I feel it is important, if the findings are to be used in clinical practice, to gain the advice of a statistician regarding the strength of the results given these limitations in methodology, and the choice of statistical analysis. If a strong statistician feels that despite these limitations the results are robust enough to be presented, then I believe this paper should be published in your journal.

Lack of long term follow up and lack of control intervention are other limitations. Aside from the above major issues, there are a few minor questions:

Page 6: were the thoracic spine mobilizations central of unilateral?

Page 7: end of the first paragraph: do you have any references to support the use of the 10 week intervention in order to achieve strength gains in postural muscles and to increase spinal mobility?