Reviewer’s report

Title: RCT Examining the Effect of Exercise in People with Rheumatoid Arthritis on Anti-TNFalpha Therapy Medication

Version: 2 Date: 1 June 2010

Reviewer: Arianne Verhagen

Reviewer’s report:

The authors revised their manuscript majorly according to the comments made. Most comments are dealt with appropriately, only on some comments I did not make myself clear I am afraid. Furthermore I think the formulas on sample size calculations can be deleted, because that is common knowledge.

Major compulsory revisions

• Background. The authors do not provide information on why the effect of exercise would be different in patients on anti-TNF-alpha medication compared with the RA patients not on this medication. Why would these patients react differently or why can we not assume that the RA patients on medication react the same as other RA patients?

The authors stated they addressed this issue. Now the background contains all lot of information in great detail about the effectiveness of exercise in RA patients and one sentence that the effectiveness is not evaluated in RA patients on anti-TNF-alpha medication. This is not really what I meant. My comment was that the author did not made clear to me why the available evidence on RA patients could not be extrapolated or generalized to RA patients on anti-TNF-alpha medication. What makes these patients so different that the effect of exercises also needs to be evaluated in this subgroup of patients?

• Methodology. Statistical analysis page 13. This section is not complete. Authors should describe when an intention to treat analysis is performed how they will handle missing data. Furthermore more information on multiple regression analysis should be provided. I assume this will be performed using the primary outcome as the dependent variable, but will it be dichotomised? How many and which variables will enter the regression analysis? Etc.

The author indeed completed this section, but not according to the latest evidence on how to deal with missing data. Perhaps they need help from a statistician here? Last measure carried forward is not regarded an appropriate way of dealing with missings nowadays, we prefer multiple imputation techniques, especially when missings are selective or when the amount is over 5%.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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