Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of hypnosis/guided imagery in fibromyalgia syndrome - a systematic review and meta-analysis of controlled trials

Version: 2 Date: 13 April 2011

Reviewer: Michael Hsu

Reviewer's report:

The authors made a number of corrections to the manuscript that have greatly improved the quality.

Upon re-reviewing the manuscript, however, I do have two Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The "Pain follow up" portion of the results (Table 2), with a p value of <0.00001, is very dubious. There is no mention of how many subjects dropped out prior to the follow-up point for each of these studies (Haanen et al and Menziers et al). I suspect there was no intent-to-treat analysis in these studies. If you have information on how many subjects dropped out and whether there was any intent-to-treat analysis, please include this. If you don't have this information, it is better to not report the overall effect at follow-up, as the quality of this analysis would be significantly lower than the rest of your meta-analysis. Please change or delete any mention of the "large effects on pain at follow-up" in the RESULTS and DISCUSSION section, accordingly.

2. With only 6 studies, a subgroup analysis is essentially meaningless. Furthermore, the only statistically significant finding ("A significant effect on pain was only detectable for studies with home training by audiotapes") was not corrected for multiple comparisons, and only two of the three studies that had home training by audiotapes showed significant effect on pain, so the statement is confusing. The overall manuscript would be stronger if the subgroup analysis, along with Table 6, was deleted. Please also delete any mention of the subgroup analysis in the ABSTRACT and DISCUSSION sections.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the ABSTRACT, the first sentence in the Results section does not apply to two of the studies (Menziers et al, which used only daily audiotape; and Rucco et al, for which the number of sessions was individualized). Please delete this sentence.

2. Under the "Types of studies" heading in the Eligibility Criteria subsection under METHODS (page 4), there are a few language errors: "unspecific" should be changed to "nonspecific"; the word "intervention" should come after "pharmacological or non-pharmacological", and "Patients diagnosed with FMS on defined criteria" should be changed to "Patients diagnosed with FMS based on defined criteria".
3. Under the "Setting, referral and exclusion criteria" heading in the Study Characteristics subsection under METHODS (page 8), "in case analgetic medication" should be changed to "who were taking analgesic medication". Please also change "analgetic" to "analgesic" in Table 1.

4. Under the "Participants" heading in the Study Characteristics subsection under METHODS, the sentence beginning with "Two studies reported the number of persons" should be changed to "Two studies reported the percentage of persons".

5. In that same section, in the next paragraph, the median number of controls is not 27. Please correct this.

6. In the same paragraph, "median of 88 (range 35-94)\%" should be changed to "median percentage of 88 (range 35-94)\%", to avoid confusion.

7. In the same paragraph, "median of 63 (range 17-100)\%" should be changed to "median percentage of 63 (range 17-100)\%".

8. The paragraphs under the "Interventions" heading in the Study Characteristics subsection under METHODS are very hard to read. It would be much clearer if you simply referred the reader to Table 2.

9. In the first sentence in the Quality Ratings of Trials subsection under METHODS, the non-word "informations" should be changed to "information".

10. Under the "Overall meta-analysis" heading in the "Synthesis of Results" subsection under METHODS, the numbers reported for the effect size and 95% CI for change in HRQOL at final treatment are different than those reported in Table 5 and Figure 2. Please correct whichever is wrong.

11. Under the "Sensitivity analysis" heading in the "Synthesis of Results" subsection under METHODS, please change "were calculated" to "were calculated by the authors of this review", for the sake of clarification.

12. In the "Implications for Research" subsection under CONCLUSIONS, "life or audiotape therapy" should be changed to "live or audiotape therapy".

13. In Table 1, any instance of "NR" should be changed to "NP", if indeed it is meant to represent data that was "not provided on request" as you have in the caption of this table.

14. In Table 2, change any instance of "single" to "individual". Single seems to imply that there was only one session.

15. In Figure 1, delete the word "of" that comes after any number. Also, modify the flowchart so that, instead of "10 records after duplicates removed" it reads "57 records after duplicates removed". You may wish to also have an additional box above that showing "67 records identified", and a box to the side showing "10 removed due to duplication".
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

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.