Reviewer's report

Title: The Maastricht Ultrasound Shoulder pain trial (MUST): Ultrasound imaging as a diagnostic triage tool to improve management of patients with non-chronic shoulder pain in primary care: study protocol (NTR2403)

Version: 2 Date: 25 May 2011

Reviewer: John H Kalbfleisch

Reviewer's report:

These comments follow a request for statistical review.
The proposed statistical methods of data summary and analysis are acceptable.

Major Compulsory Revisions – none.

Minor Essential Revisions.

(1) The sample size of 226 is the total of both study groups. I am assuming the randomization will be accomplished so group sample sizes are about equal (if not, explain in methods).

Discretionary Revisions

(2) I wonder if patients requiring shoulder surgery would be analyzed as a separate subgroup(s) ?

(3) If this makes sense, are there any plans to measure the contralateral shoulder (possible covariate data) ?

(4) Would patients with a history of shoulder surgery be excluded (surgery could possibly have fewer options)? It seems the recruitment will be patients with a first life-time shoulder event (not sure).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.
John H. Kalbfleisch, Ph.D.