Reviewer's report

Title: Recovery of brachial plexus lesions after heavy backpack use: A follow-up case series

Version: 1 Date: 9 September 2010

Reviewer: Binu Thomas

Reviewer's report:

The authors have done well in undertaking a follow up case series on brachial plexus palsy following heavy back pack use. There is a role for studying the prognosis and identifying the weight of the pack contributing to this not uncommon condition in the specified population.

Major compulsory revisions

1. More detailed description of how the authors concluded that the weight of 40 kg and above was found to be causative of the palsy. An additional table with relevant data needs to be provided.

2. In a previous study from the same group (Reference 4), the authors have mentioned that “since the review was retrospective, there was missing data on potentially confounding factors such as weight” and “the lesions are relatively uncommon, so it would be difficult to have an adequately powered study examining the major potentially confounding factors”. The authors need to clarify how these issues were addressed in this study.

3. The 6 patients analyzed over phone: how was the motor recovery assessed in this group and the combined data analyzed.

Minor / discretionary revisions

1. The title “Recovery of brachial plexus lesions resulting from heavy backpack use: A follow-up case series” brings out the substance of the paper better.

2. Abstract: Background line 2: I would not agree that this condition is “common”. I would prefer to use “have been reported “instead.


4. Line 4: maybe rewritten: patients were followed up....
5. Results: Line 1: “lesion” maybe replaced with onset of weakness.
6. Line 2, 3, 4: The weight of the …) what do you mean by this statement? Please word differently.
7. Line 4: maybe changed to: The initial electromyography did not predict recovery.
8. Background
9. Paragraph 1, Line 2: “commonly occur” maybe changed to “have been reported”.
10. Paragraph 2 Line 5: Reference 4 to be shown after the “previously reported series” if the author means the previous report from the same authors and remove reference [9, 10] in Line 6.
11. In section Methods, Tests: Six patients were interviewed by phone, was the DNA testing for HNPP done in the patients?
12. Background variables: provide reference for classification of body structure by physiotherapist.
13. In Predictors of EMG results, please clarify what you mean by sentence 1&2.
14. In Discussion paragraph 2, please rewrite for more lucid understanding.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare I have no competing interests