Reviewer's report

Title: Inter- and intra-observer reliability of clinical movement-control tests for marines

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Reviewer: annemarie vlaar

Reviewer's report:

The authors investigate the inter- and intra-observer reliability and the sensitivity and specificity of 6 clinical movement-control tests for low back and lower extremities in 33 marines. The study question and methods posed by the authors is well defined.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. the gold standard in this study is the question if the volunteer had pain the last six months or at the moment of the investigation. I think this is a suboptimal gold standard to calculate the sensitivity and specificity.

2. the authors included only marines on duty and no marines who seeks medical help. They write in the discussion this is a strength of their study, however to calculate the sensitivity and specificity I think it nescessary to include proven "ill marines" and "healthy marines".

3. Test protocol: the interobserver variability is only measured for a part of the procedure (only the performance). The oral instuction and the demonstration is only done by the instructing observer and not by the second observer. Only the performance of the test by the subject is scored by both observers at the same time.

Was the instucting observer the same in the test and re-test situation? Otherwise this may be an explanation of the low intra-observer varialbility.

Minor essential revisons:

1. title: please mention that not only the inter- and intraobserver reliability is studied but also sensitivity and specificity.

2. Abstract
A: in background: not only sensitivity but also specificity is studied
B: results: the values of sensitivity and specificity are not mentioned.
3. only 1 female is tested against 32 male, no point about this is made in the discussion.
4. Results: in table 2 the mean kappa coefficient of test SB is missing
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests in relation to this paper.