Reviewer’s report

Title: Short-term outcomes of extracorporeal shock wave therapy for the treatment of chronic non-calcific tendinopathy of the supraspinatus: a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial.

Version: 1 Date: 18 November 2011

Reviewer: Steve Tumilty

Reviewer’s report:

I agree with the authors that this study, using a different protocol has shown efficacy of ESWT for non-calcific tendinopathy of supraspinatus in the short term. Normal turnover/remodelling of collagen in tendons takes approx. 90 days and many research studies use the 12 week point to measure outcomes. With any form of electrotherapy there is going to be a mixture of positive and negative studies published until the optimum dose and application is found. This study adds to the few others that have explored the efficacy of this modality.

Discretionary revisions:
1. I think the 30 point change in CMS score to measure success has poor justification. The two articles cited to support this give no indication that 30 points is relevant. Thirty points is a large difference considering the CMS is only a 100 point scale and if for instance, 30 points was used in the power calculations, then this would equate to low numbers needed to detect such a change. The authors might consider making it clear that the 30 point difference was their opinion and not derived from research evidence.

2. Again, considering the 30 point change in CMS to measure success; Table 6 displays patient 9 in the treatment group and patient 3 in the placebo group as having successful treatments without reaching the 30 point cut-off. Is this correct?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.