Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of Working Characteristics and Taught Ergonomics on The Prevalence of Musculoskeletal Disorders Amongst Dental Students

Version: 2 Date: 29 October 2012

Reviewer: Grant Townsend

Reviewer's report:

This paper adds to the literature relating to musculoskeletal problems in dental students who are undertaking clinical practice as part of their programmes. It serves to highlight the high prevalence of these types of problems in the dental student body, especially amongst females, and reinforces the need to include ergonomics as a topic within modern dental curricula.

Major compulsory revisions

There are some areas in the manuscript where the use of statistics is incorrect or misleading.

For example:

- in the 3rd paragraph of the section on Study Population under Methods, the authors state that P values of less than 0.05 and 0.001 were taken as statistically significant. It is sufficient to just state that values less than 0.05 were taken as statistically significant.

- in the 3rd paragraph of the results, the authors indicate that there is a significant difference but give p>.001. Of course, this should be P<0.001 and, based on my comment above, I suggest that this be reported as P<0.05.

- in other parts of the manuscript, exact probabilities are reported. It would be preferable to report the p values consistently, and I would suggest using p<0.05 rather than the exact probabilities.

- in the 2nd paragraph under 'Working hours', it is stated that students who used vibrating instruments 'for 0.72 times more number of hours are likely to report having discomfort in hands and fingers.' This does not seem to be correct.

Minor essential revisions

There are still many grammatical errors and problems with English style in the manuscript that need to be addressed to ensure clarity. I strongly suggest that the authors seek assistance to edit the paper.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I have acted as an External Examiner in the past for the First Professional Exam in the BDS programme at IMU but have no direct conflicts.