Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 2  Date: 9 November 2012

Reviewer: Prawit Janwantanakul

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract
• Should specify whether the study examined the point- or period prevalence. This comment also apply to the context of the manuscript.
• The authors collected data from clinical and non-clinical year students but the writing make me understand that only the results from clinical year students were reported here. I don’t see how the authors utilize data from non-clinical year students here. Omit?

Introduction
• The reason stated in the manuscript for conducting this study is not fully clear (i.e. …fewer studies were attempted among the dental students…). The reason for conducting the study should relate to lack of relevant knowledge rather than small number of studies.

Methods
• I confused who was the study population of this study (All dental students enrolled in the 5 participating dental schools in their third, fourth and fifth year were invited to participate in the survey…in addition to first and second year dental students in the participating schools as comparison group).
• More details regarding statistical analysis should be added, e.g. how the regression was carried out in step-by-step fashion, how several comparisons were conducted.

Results
• The result of pilot study should also be reported.
• …All the missing data were checked through running frequencies… What was the procedure used to manage missing data?
• Using a table to demonstrate demographic data may be easier to comprehend.
• Please describe the statistical use for the finding “The relation between Gender and reporting of WMSD was significant as female students were more likely to have WMSD during clinical years (P=0.002).
• Table 2 can be omitted because the authors repeated the items in the context.
• I understand that the association between sitting variables and LBP was demonstrated using the logistic regression analysis. Usually the table is needed for logistic results and in the table there should have a reference group (OR =1.00) to make it comprehensive. This comment also applies to the rest of variables examined in this study.

• “The fourth part of the questionnaire addressed the taught ergonomics and prevention of WMSD. Responses in relation to this part were elaborated in table 5” Some conclusion should be helpful.

Discussion
• More specific suggestions related to the findings of the study rather than general recommendation (e.g. health promotion, institutional intervention) would be better.

• One significant limitation of cross-sectional study is that the causal relationship between interested variables and WMSD cannot be identified. This limitation should be included in the discussion.

Others
• There are several typographic errors.

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.