Reviewer's report

Title: Patients with Shoulder Syndromes in General and Physiotherapy Practice, an observational study

Version: 2 Date: 23 January 2013

Reviewer: Judith K Sluiter

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Manuscript Kooijman et al Patients with shoulder syndromes in general and physiotherapy practice, an observational study

1. the question posed by the authors is well defined but could be more consistent used as anchor for the readers in the abstract
2. the methods are appropriate and well described
3. the data seems sound
4. the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition
5. the discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data
6. the limitations of the work are stated, although not in extension
7. the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished
8. the title and abstract convey what has been found but the abstract needs more structure with the two questions clearly stated and results structured per question
9. the writing is acceptable

Discretionary revisions:
- p.7 line 4: the definition of an episode of shoulder problems is actually a definition of a care episode of shoulder problems: use this description throughout the manuscript
- results section: beware of using percentages when actually proportions of percentages of group of patients are meant
- results: change wordings in line 8 when reporting about GP: It is 42% of patients and not on average 42%
- results: how long on average is the care episode in GP?
- results: what proportion of all shoulder problems were the shoulder syndromes in the GP registry?
- results: check wordings on percentages of percentages of what... when describing results for physiotherapy practices.
- what kind of treatment goals were set in the physiotherapy practices?

Discussion:

- discuss possible pitfalls of having different time periods in the different registries used and large differences in numbers that you like to compare

- what kind of shoulder complaints were missed in physiotherapy practices because only 27% of shoulder complaints treated were the shoulder syndromes

- what do the outcomes learn us now?

Table 3: numbers per group are more informative than total in topics origination and cause

In general:

- Check language and typo errors throughout the manuscript

- Check ways of describing percentages of subgroups

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.