Reviewer's report

Title: Compression and contact area of anterior strut grafts in the instrumented spine: a biomechanical study

Version: 2 Date: 21 August 2013

Reviewer: Andrew T.M Phillips

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript is much improved following the reviewers' comments. I confirm that it is suitable for publication but recommend the follow non-essential changes to the manuscript:

Line 110 - please change 'dowel' to 'block'. It would also be useful to clarify the orientation of the block as the sides are not of equal length.

Line 121 - It would be helpful to quote the accuracy and reproducibility of the system here rather than relying on the reader to look at previous studies.

Lines 132-135 - In the view of the reviewer the reader would still benefit from schematic diagrams of the different systems. This is an essential minor revision.

Line 137 - Please state who carried out the procedure - Engineer? / Surgeon? and whether the same person carried out all procedures and what their level of experience is.

Line 190 - when 'shortening' how much movement does this produce and what is the guideline as to how much to shorten?

Lines 255 to 260 - It would seem that in terms of clinical recommendations this is the most important conclusion and the reviewer suggests the authors may wish to move this to the Conclusions section.

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