Reviewer's report

Title: Protocol for Determining the Diagnostic Validity of Physical Examination Maneuvers for Shoulder Pathology

Version: 1 Date: 9 September 2011

Reviewer: Gerard A Malanga

Reviewer's report:

This is a very ambitious research project. I do believe it is of great interest in value to a variety of clinicians taking care of patients with musculoskeletal disorders including orthopedic surgeons, physical medicine rehabilitation specialist, rheumatologist, in primary care physicians. While I have some disagreements regarding physical examination test chosen, I do believe they are reasonable. My biggest concern is the stats are performed in various ways by various physicians and therefore need to be standardized true a specific way that the test are performed so that each evaluating clinician performs the physical examination maneuver in the same manner. Therefore the exact description of how these maneuvers are performed should be added to his paper. In addition, each clinician involved in performing these physical examination maneuvers should be instructed as to how each test is expected to be performed. While many of the clinicians they feel they know exactly how to perform these various test maneuvers, they are often performed in not standardized fashion and interpreted individual manners. For example, the description of how range of motion will be performed should be clearly delineated i.e. visual inspection, goniometric measurement, etc. Another area of concern would be how strength would be tested and measured in a valid and standardized manner. I would therefore suggest that a section is added such as a chart that describes specifics of how each of these included tests in this study would be performed. This may also require a video that is made for each of the examiners involved in the study specifically describing how each test is expected to be performed and interpreted.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.