Reviewer's report

Title: A comparative study on the prevalence of musculoskeletal complaints among musicians and non-musicians.

Version: 1 Date: 25 October 2012

Reviewer: Bionka Huisstede

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BMC-musculoskeletal disorders

A comparative study on the prevalence of musculoskeletal complaints among musicians and non-musicians.

In this study the occurrence of musculoskeletal complaints in six body regions within music academy students were compared to a control group, i.e. medical students. It is an important and well written study.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting work. Here are some global comments and specific critiques of this manuscript with the hope that they are helpful and may facilitate revisions or future submissions:

General Comment:
This is an important question likely to be of interest to readers of BMC musculoskeletal disorders.

Discretionary Revisions:

Methods/Results:
I have one major concern:
You describe that musculoskeletal complaints were divided in specific body regions, subdivided in 21 localizations. In musicians most complaints can be expected in the upper extremity, I would also be interested in the complaint for the elbow, and the wrist/hands separately. In this case, you should include an extra body region. Furthermore, I would also have reported complaints in the hips and knees separately. Maybe, if you do, in your results (en discussion), you can give more precise information.

Minor Essential Revision:

Abstract
- Method, 4th sentence: ‘… in seven regions’. I think you mean ‘… in six regions’
- Results, last sentence. Do you want to conclude that music academy students reported more complaints in …. than medical students?

Background
Well written.

Methods
The method is appropriate and well written.

Results
Well reported.

Page 10, second paragraph, please change table 2 in Table 2.

Page 10, last paragraph, please change table 3 in Table 3.

Table 1
- Please indicate the cases in which means are presented, for example: ‘hours practice in one week (sd)’
Do you mean:
- hours of practice on a instrument?
- Mean (sd)
‘age’ (sd)
Do you mean age (mean (sd))

Please also check the other tables regarding the above-mentioned.

- Please describe your items precise, for example ‘hours practice in one week’. I think you mean ‘hours practice each week … on their instrument’

Table 2
- Please describe the items ‘average number of complaints’ more precise.
- Furthermore, please indicate more precise what you mean with the numbers reported after the ‘average number of complaints’? I think you mean the number of area’s within this subcategory, for example the . In my opinion, it would be more interesting to report the number of complaints in other subcategory. See also my suggestion of reporting in a total of eight specific body regions (elbow and wrist/hand separately, and hip and knee separately)

Discussion
Well written, limitations clearly stated. The conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests in relation to the paper.