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20 August, 2002

Dear Sir/Madam,

We have revised the manuscript, providing the explanation/changes as requested by the reviewer:

1. **Repeatability of the load deformation data by continuous constrained testing as opposed to stepwise pure moment:** Although the reviewer disagreed to our view, he accepted our revised explanation. No change has been made.

2. **Suggested changes in the second last sentence of the limitation paragraph** – The changes as suggested has been made in the appropriate section [page 8, para 1, line 8 of the second revision of the manuscript].

3. **Method of application of Preload:** The method of application of preload for biomechanical testing of the spine is not beyond debate[1]. To our knowledge, there is no known method of application of either bending load or preload in vitro, which may exactly replicate the loading of the spine in vivo. We have used a method of application of preload which has been previously published in a peer reviewed literature [2]. We agree with the reviewer that different method of application of preload will significantly affect the load-deformation data. This certainly makes it impossible to compare the results obtained from two different studies, using two different methods of application of preload or deforming load. However, we have used the same method to compare the two different types of implant, which understandably will affect both the set of tests in a similar fashion, favourably or adversely.

We have included further explanation of the method of application of preload, as advised by the reviewer [page 3 last paragraph, page 4 first paragraph]. Figure 4 has been revised to show the method of application of the preload used in the present study. The legends to the figure 4, 5, and 6 have also been revised to indicate where the preload has been shown, or not shown in the picture.

References:
