Reviewer's report

Title: A high prevalence of cumulative trauma disorders in Iranian instrumentalists

Version: 3 Date: 4 July 2004

Reviewer: Alice Brandfonbrener

Reviewer's report:

General
The article is of interest because it represents a sub-population of musicians not previously studied. That said, there some major problems with it both in content and context.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The English usage, not his native tongue, is poor enough that there some of his points are unclear as a result.
2. Because the author has probably not had access to a significant amount of the more current literature in the field (eg. Journal Medical Problems of Performing Artists) he seems unaware of studies the results of which would affect his interpretation of data. For example, it is well established that the rates of injuries are affected by the instrument. Players of plucked strings have a disproportionately high risk for injury, as do hand drummers.
3. The population he studied, adults who are new to the instrument and have played them for relatively brief periods of time have not been studied. It is known that adults starting instruments appear to be at risk.
4. The author inappropriately concludes that because his subjects had a greater occurrence of RSI's that the explanation is in "genetics". This may be, including the possibility that they have greater ligamentous laxity in their fingers, but he has not made the case.
5. There are other statements that one could argue about, eg. the use of NCV's to define CTS in the absence of clinical findings is not established. TOS rarely if ever (never in my experience) represents a neurogenic problem and electrodiagnostic testing is uniformly negative in the experience of most clinicians who see musicians.
6. The author is to be commended for undertaking the study and if major rewriting is done it would be a contribution to the field.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

None