Reviewer's report

Title: National audit of post-operative management in spinal surgery

Version: 2 Date: 16 March 2006

Reviewer: J David Cassidy

Reviewer's report:

General
You have asked me to comment on the comments of reviewer 3. First, the useable response rate is 51/89=57% and not 61% as stated in the paper. This should be corrected. Second, the response rate is a problem as is the selection of subjects. The authors should acknowledge these as limitations of their study in the discussion. They are probably surveying a small proportion of the surgeons that provide spine surgery in the UK. In addition, they are surveying those that belong to specialty societies, and may practice differently than those that don't belong. Nevertheless, the take home message is still probably valid. Even respondents in specialty societies don't tend to recommend postoperative rehabilitation. This type of practice variation is usually due to inconsistent evidence of effectiveness. The authors should 'suggest' that their study demonstrates potential variation (line of the discussion), rather than state it is 'clearly demonstrated.'

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
Please correct your response rate and include a paragraph in the discussion detailing the limitations of your survey (see above).
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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)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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 limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.