Reviewer's report

Title: A systematic review of the psychometric properties of the Boston Carpal Tunnel Questionnaire

Version: 1 Date: 17 July 2006

Reviewer: Joy Macdermid

Reviewer's report:

General

Summary: An excellent and informative article. Synthesizing information on outcomes measures is very useful. This particular instrument is used internationally and for a common disorder- therefore more clear information on the psychometrics of the tool will be valuable to both clinical researchers and clinicians. I think with additional detail on methods and some attention to how the synthesized information might be applied to practice it would be very useful to both groups.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. More detail on exclusion/inclusion criteria for papers searched for  
2. Describe in detail the process for locating and refining the number of articles retrieved and how this was reduced to 9 included in review; include keywords, databases, dates, numbers retrieved, number after title review, after abstract review and then to final review  
3. Describe in more detail how data abstraction and coding was performed, raters, blinding etc- ??? Was a consensus process used to overcome disagreements

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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)

1. Call SF-36 a general health status measure NOT QoL as it does not fit classic definition of QoL  
2. Provide supplementary data table for the interested reader on the details of data extracted from papers; the benefit of online is that this supplementary information can be shared  
3. Is it possible to provide some key summary information that might be useable to clinicians or researchers  
   - is it possible to provide summary measures of means, for pre post RX, sd, changes expected with conservative or surgical management and clinically important difference calculations based on the summary scores; in others words how can your work be practically applied.

I think it is important to think about how you can facilitate your work being put into practice and provide useful tools or summary that could be used to assist knowledge transfer.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'