Reviewer's report

Title: Surgery is more cost-effective than splinting for carpal tunnel syndrome. Results of an economic evaluation alongside a randomized controlled trial.

Version: 2 Date: 27 August 2006
Reviewer: Vilh Finsen

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper seems improved after the discussion of the low price of surgery in Holland has been included. I mainly have some minor points to raise.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
In the discussion section the recalculation of absenteeism after the patients who were away from work a long time have been removed is new information and should go in the results section. It seems to me that this problem could have been avoided by using median and range instead of mean. However: are the means calculated only from those who were absent from work or is it a mean for the whole group, including those who stayed at work? This should be made clear.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Abstract: It seems silly to state that there is no statistically significant difference between the data that give a mean of 2126 Euro and those that give a mean of 2111 Euro. Even if there proved to be a stat. sign. diff. these 15 Euro would be of no imaginable practical consequence in the real world.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
It also seems silly to suggest that one in 10 adult women in Holland have CTS. Presumably they just had one or more positive findings on neurophysiology.

It also seems a bit superfluous to state that CTS is common. All readers will know this.

If the only out-of-pocket expense was over-the-counter medication, then why not skip the out-of-pocket and just say over-the-counter-medication?

Line 7, page 12: Delete However and put As. It sounds better.

Finally I should like to point out that the fact that the procedure takes 15 minutes does not mean that 4 can be performed in one hour. Furthermore, there are other costs involved: Cleaning, capital costs etc. It does not really matter as the reader has been provided with the sums and attention has been drawn in the manuscript to this matter. He can make up his own mind about it.

What next?: Accept after discretionary 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