Reviewer's report

Title: The pendulum test as a tool to evaluate the passive knee stiffness and viscosity of patients with rheumatoid arthritis

Version: 2 Date: 6 November 2006

Reviewer: Barry Stillman

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None required — I congratulate the authors on the diligence and quality of their revisions.
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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)
MAIN PAPER /BACKGROUND
1. First paragraph, line 5: Change spelling of 'poliarticular' to 'polyarticular'.

2. First paragraph, last line: Consider changing to read: 'The clinical measurement of joint stiffness has previously been considered to have lower sensitivity because of the difficulty in its quantification.'

3. Second from last paragraph: Change 'we seek for relationships…' to 'we seek relationships…'

MAIN PAPER /METHODS
1. Under the heading 'subjects', first paragraph, first sentence: Change the five instances of '+' to '±'.

2. Under the heading 'subjects', first paragraph, line 3: Change 'participated to the study' to 'participated in the study'.

3. Under the heading 'subjects', first paragraph, third from last line: Change 'inferior limbs' to 'the lower limbs'.

4. Under the heading 'subjects', first paragraph, first sentence: Change the five instances of '+' to '±'.

5. Under the heading ‘Subjects’, second paragraph, second sentence: Change to: ‘…for the usual self-care (dressing, feeding, bathing, grooming and toileting), avocational (i.e. recreational or leisure) and vocational (i.e. work, school, and homemaking) activities.’

6. Under the heading ‘Testing protocol’, first paragraph, fourth sentence (commencing ‘We adapted the protocol…’: Finish this sentence ‘or hamstring muscles.’ and start a new sentence ‘The angle at the start…’.

7. Under the heading ‘Testing protocol’, first paragraph, third sentence: Change ‘cause the leg to finally comes…’ to ‘caused the leg to finally come…’.

8. Under the heading ‘Statistical analyses’, second paragraph, secnd from last sentence: Change to ‘This extra test addresses a specific assumption required to validate…

MAIN PAPER /DISCUSSION
9. First paragraph, second sentence: Change the end of this sentence to ‘…significantly increased knee stiffness.’

10. Third paragraph, last sentence: Change to: ‘In fact, passive leg oscillations may be modelled according to the laws of physics for a simple pendulum… …can support evaluation of the stiffness and viscosity associated with the cyclic movement…’

11. Fifth paragraph, second sentence: Change to: For example, reflex or voluntary muscle contractions are
possible sources of ambiguity since they make it difficult to distinguish between the...

12. Sixth paragraph, second sentence: Use ‘non-weightbearing’.

13. Seventh paragraph, first sentence: Change to: ‘With respect to the subjective sense of stiffness discussed by several authors [24-28], the present results cannot provide useful insights into the nature of this sensation in RA.’

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests