Reviewer's report

Title: Reliability of lumbar spinal palpation, range of motion and determination of position

Version: 2 Date: 10 July 2007

Reviewer: Veronique Feipel

Reviewer's report:

General

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

1. Units should be provided for standard deviations (page 9, lines 2-3).

2. ICC's should be reported with 2 significant digits.

3. The use of the same landmarks for the second measurement session (no new palpation of landmarks) is disturbing, as it yields that the results are useless for clinical studies (unlike what is stated the concluding remarks). I cannot understand the rationale underlying the second measurement session.

4. The confidence intervals reported in the study (0.2° in all cases) are very small. To clarify this point, the authors should explain how confidence intervals were computed. Previous reports on lumbar ranges of motion showed large inter-individual variability (standard deviations around 10°, considering the present sample size, this would yield 95% (if this was used) CI around 4° and not of 0.2°).

5. Table 5 should be omitted.

6. The impressing difference in results regarding palpation agreement should be discussed with greater details, as it is quite different from previous reports. In my eyes, it is not sufficient to state that it is excellent.

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

7. A figure IS part of the submission. Please provide a legend.

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 importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests