Reviewer’s report

Title: A pragmatic randomised controlled trial of hydrotherapy and land exercises on overall well being and quality of life in rheumatoid arthritis

Version: Date: 22 August 2006

Reviewer: Arianne AP Verhagen

Reviewer’s report:

General

I would like to complement the authors with this manuscript. It represents a lot of hard and thorough work of relevance for primary care. It is very well written and concerns a very well performed randomised clinical trial, with a concealed randomisation, blinded outcome assessment on some secondary outcomes (most outcome measures were assessed by the patients who were not blinded) and a very well performed analysis with sensitivity analysis.

I have one minor point: intervention was provided, as the authors state on page 8: “These staff made equal contributions to both treatment arms.” The rationale of it is being discussed on page 17 and 18 that “.. different therapists could have led to important differences in approach”. I could also argue that by doing so therapists attitude may have led to contamination of the two treatment arms, resulting in more contrast, by being involved in both treatments and may be prefer consciously or subconsciously one of both treatments more. Please also discuss this aspect.

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

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?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No