Author's response to reviews

Title: Validation of a new test that assesses functional performance of the upper extremity and neck (FIT-HaNSA) in patients with shoulder pathology

Authors:

Joy C MacDermid (jmacderm@uwo.ca)
Myriam Ghobrial (myriam_ghobrial@hotmail.com)
Karine B Quirion (sea_kwinz@hotmail.com)
Melanie St-Amour (mstamour23@cogeco.ca)
Tanya Tsui (t_tsui@hotmail.com)
Dave Humphreys (dchumphreys@rogers.com)
John McCluskie (mccluski@hhsc.ca)
Eddy Shewayhat (eshewayhat@hotmail.com)
Vickie Galea (galeav@mcmaster.ca)

Version: 3 Date: 5 April 2007

Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to

Thank you for the feedback!

Reviewer's report
Title: Validation of a new test that assesses functional performance of the upper extremity and neck (FIT-HaNSA) in patients with shoulder pathology
Version: 2 Date: 6 March 2007
Reviewer: Jolanda Luime

Reviewer's report:

Page 4
The introduction still doesn't bring me in an easy way to the objectives of the study. Please see suggestion to restructure the introduction in the attachment. Besides, it would be easier to state the objectives in a few sentences like we aim (i) to develop a test protocol that requires coordinated movement and positioning of the upper extremity and neck across different tasks that simulate elements of functional activity and (ii) to test its validity and reliability in a first phase diagnostic study. I would leave the rest of the information to be written in the method section.

We have revised the introduction to make it shorter and more streamlined, although we have tried to maintain the concepts that we feel underlie the need for this particular test. We have incorporated your suggestions into the purpose and also started off with a global statement of why development of this test would be important. We've removed some of the details, particularly those about the functional test reported in the literature.

Page 7
The section on participants is confusing. Previously 12 volunteers were mentioned among which the protocol was developed. Part 1 starts with the heading 'protocol development'???

We have renamed the sections to make things clearer. In addition, we distinguished sections from groups as group 1 and 3 were used for validity analyses; group 2 being the subgroup of patients for which reliability testing was done. None of the patients were duplicated between different groups.

“Part 3 “
There is a problem with all of the diagnosis mentioned here. Most physical examination test lack validity to come to these diagnosis or their validity is not tested in the population you are describing here. There is very limited evidence about the use of sequential testing in shoulder disorders. This makes it complicated to reproduce the study with similar findings

We have added some comments which validate the point you are making here. Nevertheless, we had highly trained and experienced clinicians who specialize in
orthopedic disorders of the shoulder examined these patients and determine their diagnosis. In addition most of them had multiple diagnostic procedures and imaging to contribute to this diagnosis process. While isolated physical assessment techniques for the shoulder have their limitations, we believe that the overall diagnostic process used in the study was “as good as it gets”. There is never a guarantee between studies that even patients with the same diagnosis would represent the same spectrum of disease across different centers. Our paper was not really dealing with diagnosis but dealing with functional assessment- we merely tried to communicate the types of problems are patients were diagnosed with so that the reader could understand the nature of the shoulder disorders.

Page 8
Analyses: It would be nice just to phrase this section without the numbering. 
Done

Results
Could you please present the confidence interval around the number of seconds? Protocol development Second sentence: please add “The mean times to stop the tasks 1, 2, 3 because of pain….” Nineth sentence: It is not clear from the text what is meant by “The percentage of shoulder functional ability” Validation Please add the confidence intervals around the mean time
Done

Discussion
Wouldn’t it be better to say in the first sentence: This study describes the development of a new functional performance test for shoulder pain patients and provides preliminary results for its validity and reliability. 
Done

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

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)