Reviewer's report

Title: Differences in the pectoralis minor length test in subjects with and without symptoms: a study of intra rater reliability and validity.

Version: 2 Date: 1 June 2007

Reviewer: Andrea Bialocerkowski

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper reported on the intra-rater reliability and diagnostic accuracy of a pectoralis minor length test. The authors found that although the test had acceptable reliability, the diagnostic accuracy was poor, due to very low specificity. No participants, whether they had "normal" or symptomatic shoulders reached the threshold defining “tightness”. I have reviewed this paper previously and still consider its findings to be relevant to clinical practice. Moreover, the authors have addressed all of the reviewers' comments, which I feel has substantially increased the quality of their work. As such I have only a few minor comments, that are listed under the minor essential and discretionary revisions categories.

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)
- Referencing in text is inconsistent, with some reference numbers in superscript and others not
- Second page of introduction, the second paragraph consists of only one sentence. The paragraph should be merged with the following paragraph
- Throughout the text, it is stated that the cuff off mark for tightness is 2.6 centimeters. However in Table 5, 2.54 centimetres is quoted. This cut off mark should be consistent throughout the manuscript (suggest changing Table 5)
- Discussion: on the eighth line, it is stated that the reliability gained in this study exceeded 0.75. However in the previous sentence it is stated that Portney and Watkins (2000) advises that reliability to exceed 0.90 for reasonably validity. Since the reliability coefficients gained in this study exceeded 0.9, should the number quoted in line 8, be 0.90 or is 0.75 correct?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
- You could possibly add an interpretation of the SEM. For example 1SEM means that you are 68% sure that the true measurement lies between +/- 0.5cm from the measured mean. If you want to be 95% certain of the range in which the measured mean lies within, then you need to calculate 2xSEM. In your example, this would mean that you are 95% confident that the true pec minor length mean would +/-1cm from the measured mean

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests