Reviewer’s report

Title: Work-related musculoskeletal disorders among Nigerian Physiotherapists.

Version: 1 Date: 1 November 2007

Reviewer: Linda A Merlino

Reviewer’s report:

General

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

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

The data presented needs to be revised to be accurately reflected and reported. For example, Table 1 the Heading states N in one column and % in another yet the first characteristic (which should be the term, rather than the word variable) is the mean age (SD) and range. This is not an N or % No number on how many people on whom this value is comprised is provided. Ditto for the remaining continuous variables. For the dichotomous variables (gender, work status, etc.) the percentages can be put in parenthesis next to the number. Additionally, some of the numbers for each of the characteristics is different. Gender has 126 respondents, ergonomic training has 113.

Table 3. This table should provide the meat of the paper. However, it is not possible to evaluate the data because some of it is not presented. The presentation should be 2 columns, those reporting MSDs (N, %) and those who do not report MSD's (N, % or mean, sd) with a third column for the statistic. That way, the true numbers can be seen. As it now stands, some of chi-square statistics are suspect since some of the cells have fewer than 5 people. Thus calculating the expected frequencies isn't possible without knowing the distribution of answers. What was the criteria for choosing the cutpoints for the continuous variables? Why not use the more appropriate t-test? Please explain in the methods on what criteria these decision were based - arbitrary?

Table 4 can be omitted and main finding just stated in the results (but provide N's, not just %).

Tables 5. Since this data is based on a Likert-type scale, what were the percentages based on? Again providing more information in the methods on what cutpoints were based on and then providing the N's for each category of response in addition to the percent is necessary.

Table 6. Please provide the N's for each cell.

Figure 1 Need to present the numbers on which the given data were obtained. The scale on the Y-axis should have the ceiling of 100, not 60 so as not to be
spurious.

Figure 2 can be omitted with main point stated in results.

Other points that might be suggested in discussion after changes are made. In the background you correctly state that age is usually associated with WRMSDs. However, no mention of this is given again with regard to your results. Also, In your background you also discuss cultural values and practices that may create differences yet you don't discuss this in the results. The fact that more males are physiotherapists, yet historically females usually report more pain and your results show greater reports of pain, I think should be addressed.

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

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?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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