Reviewer's report

Title: Carpal tunnel syndrome and the use of computer mouse and keyboard A systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 28 July 2008

Reviewer: Andrew Moore

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The authors did a reasonable search, and included studies based on reasonable criteria. Given that there are no randomised trials, they have to make do with what is available, and they chose studies least likely to be biased.

What they found was not unexpected – the lack of any good evidence of association between mouse/keyboard use and CTS. That may be a feature of the fact that there is no association – or because those who have a problem don’t work on computers because they can’t. There is a recent paper (Atroshi I, Gummesson C, Ornstein E, Johnsson R, Ranstam J. Carpal tunnel syndrome and keyboard use at work: a population-based study. Arthritis Rheum. 2007 Nov;56(11):3620-5) showing an inverse relationship between keyboard/mouse use and CTS.

Having read the paper this morning, I would suggest that for me the original Bradford-Hill rules than those of the Danish Society (but this is trivial). There are no new studies that would be included (on a quick PubMed search). The only thing I would ask is for a comment on the Atroshi study, since it implies that no observational study would ever find association, let alone cause, if people who had pain on keyboard use didn’t use keyboards.