Reviewer's report

Title: Minimal clinically important change for pain in patients with nonspecific neck pain.

Version: 1 Date: 22 August 2007

Reviewer: soledad cepeda

Reviewer's report:

General

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

None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

I recommend that the authors avoid the use of so many abbreviations. In any case, the authors should make sure that they provide a complete list of abbreviations. For example, the “RP” and “MC” abbreviations are not spelled out in the manuscript and do not appear on the list of abbreviations on page 13.

I also recommend that the authors use the same wording when referring to the external criteria used to evaluate the meaning of declines in pain intensity in the manuscript and tables. For example, on Table 2 they used “recovered” instead of “completely recovered” and “not changed” instead of “unchanged”.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

In the Discussion section, page 12, the authors describe potential differences in the minimal clinically important changes between patients with acute and chronic pain; there has been previous work on the topic. The clinical meaning of decline in pain intensity has been found to be similar in patients with acute (Cepeda et al, 2003 Pain) or chronic pain (Farrar et al, 2001 Pain), despite that both studies used different methodology. The authors could cite this previous work.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests