Reviewer's report

Title: Toe spreading ability in men with chronic pelvic pain syndrome

Version: 1 Date: 26 August 2004

Reviewer: michel pontari

Reviewer's report:

General
This study compares the ability of men with and without chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CPPS) to spread their toes. Given the common innervation of the toes and the pelvis, difficulty with toe spreading could indicate neurological dysfunction in men with CPPS. The question examined by the authors certainly is novel. The methods are well described, and in particular the population study is well defined and consistent with current definitions of CPPS. The data and sound and an adequate control group is provided. There are several limitations to the data which are adequately and forthrightly addressed by the authors. The discussion is well done and in depth. Overall this is an interesting study that provokes further interest in examining neurological dysfunction in men with CPPS while acknowledging its shortcomings.

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

none

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

none

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. The authors set the ability to spread all four toes as normal; however only 22 of the 98 controls could spread all their toes. Has this parameter ever been looked at in any other populations?
2. Is there any evidence that toe spreading on a particular side (i.e. left or right) correlates with the side of dominant handedness? Is that data available for this group?

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None