Reviewer's report

Title: The effectiveness of pelvic floor muscle training alone and with other physical therapies for the treatment of stress urinary incontinence in women: a systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 20 January 2006

Reviewer: Christian Dannecker

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a high-quality narrative systematic review (without meta-analysis). The article addresses five important research questions dealing with the following aspects of pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT): Effectiveness (PFMT alone or together with adjunctive therapies), different components of a PFMT program, factors affecting the outcome of physical therapies, the period of treatment and number of treatments, and generalisability of findings in the research settings. Unfortunately the authors did not include mixed incontinence, taking into account that very often stress and urge incontinence are present in the same patient. To answer the research questions the authors accomplished a comprehensive search of all published and peer-reviewed articles on this topic (1995 – 2005) and included - in addition to randomized controlled trials - important non randomized studies. The authors explicitly report their methods and search strategies. It is unlikely that important, relevant studies were missed. This increases our confidence in the results of the review. The inclusion criteria used to select articles are appropriate. The authors clearly state which studies were included and why; they presented their rationale. There is, however, no list of excluded trials. The validity of the studies was assessed appropriately. The assessment of studies is reproducible and was done in duplicate. The levels of agreement are reported. The authors analyzed the similarity of the designs and results of the various studies. They clearly state where heterogeneity between the studies was too much to draw any conclusions. As an important overall result the authors found PFMT alone or in combination with adjunctive therapies to be an effective therapy of female SUI. The conclusions of this review are presented in a manner relevant for clinical practise.

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)
none

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests