Reviewer’s report

Title: The Effect of Chair Massage on Muscular Discomfort in Cardiac Sonographers: A Pilot Study

Version: 1 Date: 15 February 2010

Reviewer: Wayne Albert

Reviewer’s report:

The article presents pilot work to assess the feasibility of incorporating a Corporate Massage program for cardiac sonographers. Verifying the usefulness and positive reduction of musculoskeletal disability as a result of massage is of value to the readership. Although it is understood that this is pilot work, there are revisions that are required to address procedural and methodological concerns.

1. Major COmpulsory Revisions

The article lacks an appropriate introduction that provides the reader with a: A) rationale for investigating chair massage as viable treatment for soft tissue stress relief; b) a purpose statement (this message is confused in the paper, there is a comparison of treatments as well as a desire to test the feasibility of these treatments in this population); a clear hypothesis.

In the methods, there is no discussion of the level of pain of the individuals or whether the massage was intended as a relaxation or a therapeutic massage.

It is not clear whether there was a single therapist or multiple therapists. In the methods it appears that there is a therapist, but later there is a discussion of therapists? Did they all deliver the same type of treatments. Was there an assessment of inter-therapist results. THat is, was the discussion reads more re a difference in the DASH scores between therapists?

The discussion reads more like an introduction, providing the reader with the background of the sonographers injury rates and the use of massage therapy. Much of this could be moved into the introduction section. As such there is little discussion regarding the results in terms of changes to the DASH score and the role of each treatment.

Minor Revision

Add a table of subject characteristics in the methods, including the level of disability, age, yrs as sonographer.

I would remove the figure on the subject recruitment flow as it adds nothing to the paper.

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

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'