Reviewer’s report

Title: Process skill rather than motor skill seems to be a predictor of costs for a stroke patient in working age from a rehabilitation clinic; a longitudinal study with a 1 year follow up post discharge.

Version: 1 Date: 6 December 2006

Reviewer: Jacqueline Müller-Nordhorn

Reviewer’s report:

„Process skill rather than motor skill seems to be a predictor of costs for a stroke patient in working age from a rehabilitation clinic; a longitudinal study with a 1 year follow-up post discharge.“

Costs arising in patients with stroke are an important factor for health care management. In the article by Björkdahl and Sunnerhagen, however, there are a number of issues to be addressed. The main point is that costs are determined in the context of a randomised controlled trial, which is known to induce costs on its own. It remains unclear whether only the intervention group is included or both groups of the trial. In addition, although the objective of the study is to study costs in a cohort of patients from a rehabilitation clinic, it remains unclear, whether all patients were in rehabilitation. Reasons for acute hospital stays, e.g. recurrent events, are not provided.

Title: too long, needs shortening; also, there are a number of other predictors for costs, title should be more general

Method section:

Table 1:
Participation in a randomised trial: how many patients were randomised to intervention and control group respectively? What is the intervention, what is done in the control group?

Please provide mean age as well.
Higher percentage of haemorrhagic stroke, should be commented on in the discussion section.

Unclear recruitment of patients: rehabilitation clinic or acute hospital (stroke unit presumably not in rehabilitation clinic?)

What is hospitalisation referring to - To a recurrent event following discharge from the rehabilitation clinic?

Hotel costs generally do not include medication costs.

How are motor skills and process skills defined, respectively?

Section needs shortening.

Discussion section:
Section needs shortening.

The fact that the assessment of costs was done in the context of a randomised controlled trial is not discussed, however, this is a major limitation of the study.

General: language needs some revision

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.