Reviewer's report

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

Version: 4 Date: 19 June 2007

Reviewer: Katherine Virgo

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper is somewhat improved over the last version, but still has a long way to go.

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

1. The methods section of the manuscript states that the patients who participated in the study were "in need of more time as inpatients than what was possible to provide at the stroke unit." This suggests that the patients were perhaps sicker than the usual patient population. The authors need to address in the discussion section how this affects generalizability.

2. The methods section states that 58 persons were approached for inclusion in the study. This section later states that analyses are based on all 58. How many patients actually agreed to participate in the study? If the patients did not agree to participate, then their data should not be included. If some patients refused to participate, what reasons did they give for refusal?

3. In the data analysis section, details of the linear regression are discussed: How were variables selected apriori for inclusion in the initial linear regression model? Were any variables highly correlated? If yes, how was this handled? What was the method used for the regression (stepwise, forced, etc.)?

4. The length of stay variables are obviously highly skewed. Present the data in corrected and uncorrected fashion.

5. In the results section, the authors should provide the overall power for the model shown in Table 3 and the power for the overall model shown in Table 4.

6. In Table 1, neglecting to show s.d. when displaying means, suggests to the reader than the authors are trying to hide the fact that means are probably not a good indicator of central tendency for variables such as length of stay. These data are most likely highly skewed. Either correct for skewness or present medians.

7. In Table 2 both means and medians are provided, however the same issue
appears to exists for many variables. Correct for skewness and present the corrected means with s.d. or present medians and ranges.

8. For the regression model results presented in Tables 3 and 4, explain why the intercept is so highly significant.

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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)

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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 whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

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.