Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Domestic water carrying and its implications for health in Limpopo Province, South Africa; a mixed methods pilot study

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 20 February 2010

**Reviewer:** David Hemson

**Reviewer’s report:**

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The reported high level of container/body weight (at about 60%) seems too high as it seems to imply that the average body weight is about 30kg since the container averages 19.5kg. Please check.

2. Although small, more comprehensive descriptive statistics could give a more rounded account of the sample (e.g. including ages, etc) and provide full details for the work to be replicated.

3. There could also be greater explanation for readers not familiar with Newtons to understand whether the forces are particularly great.

4. Distance needs to be reported clearly as either the distance/space between household and water source or as a round trip; from the text this is not clear.

5. The RPE could be better described for the reader to understand its application e.g. 0 = no effort, 10 = maximum effort. It is not clear how pain was reported.

6. Calculation of Newtons for head loading could be more fully explained and illustrated.

7. One aspect not fully explored is the possible accumulative pressure on body structure leading to reported spinal/neck pain; the association should be with age of respondent, and this could be included.

8. Although this is a pilot study and largely exploratory, some of the conclusions should be more fully backed with supportive tables and data. Although the analysis may be (as suggested) complex and the dataset small the relationship between CW/BW%, age, frequency etc could be further explored.

9. The lower volume of consumption of water by those experiencing neck pain could be illustrated.

10. Water carrying is not the only heavy carrying activity conducted by women and girls; there is some evidence that carrying wood can be more arduous than carrying water. This could be an explanatory factor and should be mentioned.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field
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.