Reviewer’s report

Title: First metatarso-phalangeal joint arthrodesis versus proximal phalanx hemiarthroplasty for hallux rigidus: Feasibility study for a randomised controlled trial

Version: 2
Date: 8 January 2014

Reviewer: Kent Johnson

Reviewer’s report:

This is a sound trial and generally well written. I have only a few comments, none being major.

1-Surgeon to surgeon differences, as a source of variability and thus reducing power, will not be assessed here, and this could be substantial. Could the authors describe how this would be incorporated in a larger future study? Is there any way to assess it here?

2-Would it not be possible to blind the patients to which procedure was done? I would think that would reduce risk of bias when patients are assessed with the questionnaire outcomes. Could this be discussed?

3-How will dropped out patients be incorporated in the t-test comparing MOXFQ adjusted for baseline? It probably cannot be assumed that dropouts will be captured by poor MOXFQ scores, used for last observation carried forward, as there is a large time gap between week 12 visit and week 56 visit. Could the authors discuss the possibility that informative dropout [substantially more hemiarthroplasty arm patients dropping out, requiring redo] rather than true superiority may be the explanation of an apparent success, hemiarthroplasty better than arthrodesis, by MOXFQ?

4-Grammar error: First sentence of Data Collection – “as it was purpose developed”

5-Typo: line 9, page 7. “where” should, I assume, be “were”.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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:

No to all