Reviewer's report

Title: Validation of the Short Form Health Survey Version 2 and the Walter Reed Visual Assessment Scale on a sample of adults with scoliosis: an Australian perspective.

Version: 1 Date: 28 June 2007

Reviewer: Jose Climent

Reviewer's report:

General

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

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The authors pose two different questions. The first one, about Quality of Life and scoliosis, is not new. The second one, about Walter Reed Scale validation, it's newer and more interesting. Perhaps it would be better to present only “study number 2”. Study number 1 is not so relevant and it makes the paper confusing.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Material and Methods are described inadequately. No information about study, design and validation strategy is provided. Statistics are not described in this section, too. However, authors present a lot of statistics procedures in Results section. In addition, authors use mixed procedures, parametric and non-parametric. Another issue is about effect size. Effect size is used to measure differences between two therapeutic interventions (two groups, experimental and control). It’s not useful to use effect size in a validation study, or to contrast two different measures in the same sample.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

I believe the key question is not discussed by authors: what Walter Reed scale is measuring? What contribution to health measurement in scoliosis is made by this new tool? I think that some comments about cosmetic measurement, self-image, body image, and deformity perception under the scope of Walter Reed Assessment Scale would be interesting and relevant.

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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)
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Discussion could be revised. Introduction includes some statements that would be better to argue in detail in discussion. Some statements are not supported by author’s data. For instance, comments on age and Quality of Life decrease are not based on facts, and it’s well known that quality of life decrease with age.

Conclusion includes some assertions that would be better in discussion, for example, when authors suggest new ideas about research in this field.

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:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.