Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of manual therapy to avoid progression of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis: A systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 18 December 2007

Reviewer: Axel Maier-Hennes

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:
The purpose of the review is to ask for effects of treating adolescent idiopathic scoliosis with manual therapy. For scoliosis it’s not only to avoid progression and improve Cobb angles, but to deliver a whole network for to manage the disease.

Therefore, manual therapy, a single therapy for reversible functional asymmetry, cannot be able to solve the irreversible problems caused by scoliosis. The results of the review demonstrate the lack of data and trials and should help to prevent children before puberty with scoliosis more than 20°, and adolescents with more than 30°, treated only with insufficient approaches.

But nevertheless, the advantage for children with scoliosis treated with manual therapy is that the therapy started at all, maybe it’ll be the first detection, the first medical examination. The responsible and well-informed therapist will send the patients for specific therapeutic intervention, when the scoliosis extends 20°.

In the early stages of scoliosis while the scoliosis seems to be more a reversible asymmetric dysfunction than a structural disturbance, it could be sufficient to work with mobilisation and to create physiologic balance and avoid deterioration and progression.

These cases can’t be found with the required questions of this review, but the author should take it in consideration.

The comparison with other conservative treatment systems like Schroth Method, or SEAS, mostly combinations of manual techniques, physical exercises and bracing, have to be done consequently. There are results showing the improvement for progression, Cobb angle, incidence of surgery, long-term effects after bracing, even cosmetic factors. (Wei, Rigo, Landauer, Negrini, Ferraro, Dickson, Maruyama, Bridwell, Matussek, Nachemson, Hawes,....)

Minor essential revisions:
Literal errors: Last page: tha is the, last sentence: need of, performed by operators

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.