Reviewer’s report

Title: Development and evaluation of a tool for the clinical assessment of footwear characteristics

Version: 1 Date: 24 February 2009

Reviewer: Thomas McPoil

Reviewer’s report:

General Comments:

The authors should be congratulated for their work in the development of a reliable clinical tool to evaluated footwear. The reviewer enjoyed reading the manuscript and believes it would be of great interest to the readership of the Journal.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

NONE

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Since one of the purposes of the study was to develop an efficient as well as reliable footwear assessment scale, the authors should consider providing the reader with the average time required for each of the two raters to complete the assessment scale. The reviewer would guess that the time required to complete the assessment scale would decrease with practice. Did the authors find this to be the case?

2. Page 8, Line 22, the authors describe the measurement of forefoot height. Under the heading FOREFOOT HEIGHT, the authors have in parentheses “measured at point of first metatarsophalangeal joint.” This is also written in the same manner on the actual Footwear Assessment Scale form. In the text that follows, however, the authors state that the forefoot height measurement was taken at BOTH the level of the 1st and 5th MTP joints with the average of both recorded. While the reviewer agrees with the authors that the measure of forefoot height should consist of the average of the 1st & 5th MTP joint heights – the wording at the start of this Section as well as on the actual scale “measured at point of first metatarsophalangeal joint” is misleading. The reviewer recommends that the authors clarify that the measure of forefoot is the average of the 1st & 5th MTP joint heights in both the Section title of the manuscript as well as on the actual Scale.

3. Page 11, Line 19, the authors state that the title of this Section of the paper which is describing the components of the Scale is “Shock absorption” but in their Discussion Section as well as on the actual Footwear Assessment Scale they refer to this Section of the scale as “Cushioning.” The reviewer believes that “cushioning” is a more appropriate and global term and would recommend
changing all references to this component of the scale to “cushioning.”

4. The authors should provide manufacturer details for the “penetrometer” that they describe on Page 12, under the section “Lateral midsole hardness.”

5. Page 13, under sections titled “Upper” and “Midsole,” it would be very helpful if the authors could provide a picture to provide an example of what they are describing as “upper” and “midsole” wear patterns. The reviewer believes this would be very helpful for the clinician and ensure consistency with the assessment.

Discretionary Revisions:

NONE

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.