Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical Attributes for the Conservative Gait Pattern in Diabetes

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Reviewer: Anita Raspovic

Reviewer's report:

The authors have considered the review comments carefully and have made numerous very good amendments to this paper. A couple of points remain for the consideration of the authors and editors and are listed below:

Unfortunately the reliability data on the ankle joint measure used in this study is not available for further analysis, as the related data files are corrupt. This poses a dilemma as with an intra-rater reliability ICC of 0.71, the actual error if translated into the unit of degrees may be larger somewhat larger than the statistically significant mean difference found in this study of 2 degrees. The authors at the editor's discretion may wish to consider articulating this issue more clearly in the paper given the key conclusions around links of conservative gait to reduced static ankle motion.

Could the authors please clarify what ankle measurement was taken. Is is ankle ROM as referred to throughout the paper or ankle joint dorsiflexion as the methods description suggests. All references to this variable should reflect the measure which was actually taken to avoid confusion.

Finally, the clinical implications of the study, I believe, are premature given that conservative gait and indeed general gait changes in diabetes are not well understood. Conservative gait may conceivably have positive attributes and attempting to alter this with interventions such as exercise therapy may have adverse effects (such as increasing ankle dorsiflexion leading to a more propulsive and less stable gait). I suggest more work is needed to understand this phenomena before trialing unestablished interventions on patients is explored.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests