Reviewer’s report

Title: Effectiveness of dry needling and injections of myofascial trigger points associated with plantar heel pain: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 3 July 2010

Reviewer: Peter Huijbregts

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
· Background. Paragraph 3. Line 2. Physical therapy is not an intervention, it is a profession. Please clarify which PT interventions were used in the referenced studies and if no such data is available include a comment indicating the lack of specific description and how this affects external validity of studies.
· Methods, search methods for identification of studies. Paragraph 1. Why not include MANTIS database. Please justify the choice of databases to allow the reader to establish level of comprehensiveness of the review.
· Methods, search methods for identification of studies. More information on specific search terms used is required.
· Methods, Assessment of Methodological quality: Paragraph 1. Line 7. Clarify in the text why items were removed and modified.
· Results, Trial characteristics. Paragraph 1. Lines 3-4. Provide operational definitions of physical therapy and standard therapy.
· Discussion. Paragraph 4. Indicate that no study has been done to assess interrater reliability of trigger point palpation in LE/foot.

Minor Essential Revisions
· Background. Paragraph 3. Line 8. Two other systematic reviews? Clinical Practice Guidelines are generally based on multiple systematic reviews; therefore, reference to the CPG as a systematic review seems incorrect.
· Methods, types of studies: Please justify why also quasi-experimental studies were included in this review.
· Methods, types of outcome measures; lines 2-3. It seems strange that the authors come up with such specific outcome measures. Were they established a priori by a preliminary literature review or a posteriori after the review at hand? If only VAS and health-related quality of life measures without going into specifics were considered please revise to reflect this and not even minimally “mislead” [too strong of a term] the reader?
· Methods, search methods for identification of studies. Paragraph 2. Elaborate on the method with which the grey literature was searched.
· Methods, Assessment of Methodological quality: Paragraph 1. Line 8. Please indicate if [or if not] the literature has established cut-off values for the
interpretation of the Quality Index methodological quality assessment tool.

· Results, Quality of Evidence. Paragraph 1. Line 1. Should “individual” be replaced by “overall” or “total”, especially since in line 3 reliability per item seems to be discussed?

· Results, Trial characteristics. Clarify here in text that Imamura et al used a non-randomized control group?

· Results, evidence for the effectiveness... Paragraph 3. Line 3. Indicate if indeed the Tilla and Gupta study was a crossover design?

· Data file 3: do the changes to the quality index not make it a 26-point maximum scale?

Discretionary Revisions

· Background. Paragraph 3. Line 5. Replace “although” with “but”

· Methods, types of participants: Line 4. Although likely obvious to clinicians that treat trigger points, can I suggest that the authors justify why only trigger points in LE/foot?

· Methods, types of interventions: Line 7. Can I suggest that the authors specify similarity between trigger point dry needling and specifically Ashi or pain point but not meridian-based acupuncture?

· Discussion. Paragraph 1. Line 7. Replace “While” with “..., whereas…”

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Minor issues not for publication

· Background. Paragraph 1. Line 2. Replace “effect” with “affect”

· Background. Paragraph 1. Line 3. Replace “high quality” with “high-quality”

· Background. Paragraph 2. Line 2. Replace “community dwelling” with “community-dwelling”

· Results, evidence for the effectiveness... Paragraph 2. Line 7. Precede “however” with semicolon?

· Results, evidence for the effectiveness... Paragraph 2. Line 10. Replace “between group” with “between-group”

· Discussion. Paragraph 2. Line 17. Insert comma before “as”

· Discussion. Paragraph 3. Line 5. Delete “regarding”


· Discussion. Paragraph 5. Line 5. Replace “criteria that is” with “criteria that are”

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:
I declare that I have no competing interests