Reviewer's report

Title: Radiographic correlates of hallux valgus severity in older people

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Reviewer: Alan Bryant

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In Methods, the inclusion criteria for this study was that used for a previous study. The previous study, if published, should be referenced.

In Methods - Observations - the authors claim that the traditional method of determining the HAA by bisecting the diaphysis of the 1st metatarsal is not as accurate as that described by Miller (31) as determined by Schneider et al (32). The latter article actually found little difference between the two methods in preoperative measurements, but greater differences in postoperative measurements. Accordingly, in this study where no postoperative measurements were made, either measurement technique could have been used.

In Discussion the authors claim that this study is unique in that their cohort contained a range of mature hallux valgus feet. I think this is true of a number of other studies and not unique to this particular study.

The finding of significant "lateral displacement" of the sesamoids should be reworded to say "lateral displacement of the sesamoids relative to the first metatarsal head".

The authors may be dealing with a sub-group of elderly people who's hallux valgus was not severe enough to seek surgical correction at an earlier age. I think this needs to be acknowledged so that the findings are not over generalised with respect to the aetiology of hallux valgus.

It is interesting that there seems to be an almost negative linear relationship between HAA and HAIPA, suggesting that HAIP is somewhat "protective" of the development of HV. Acknowledgement of this relationship is not new of course, being commented on by Peter Read in an 1976 edition of The Chiropodist.

The authors have produced a reputable article, well researched and one that is competently written and illustrated. Well done.

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.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests