Reviewer's report

Title: The reliability of toe systolic pressure and the toe brachial index in patients with diabetes

Version: 1 Date: 24 August 2010

Reviewer: Neil Baker

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting piece of work and is worthy of publication. There are a few small issues that would be best addressed.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Firstly it is important to recognise that PPG is not widely available or used in general clinical practice as it is expensive and generally used in either specialist, research or academic centres.

2. The Authors need to explain what PPG is and how it works together with its advantages and importantly limitations of which there are several. Perhaps the most noteable is that it is not proven to be reliable at the lower end i.e. <40mmHg this is very relevant in POAD.

3. The study does not qualify the study population or how they were selected.

4. There is an unqualified assumption that medial wall calcification (MWC) is not present in digital vessels.... this is not true, there is a paucity of evidence for this.

5. It is also important to stress that MWC is also present in many other conditions with a very high prevalence in Renal disease especially, not just Diabetes.

6. Could the authors state the prevalence of POAD in Diabetes .... they say that it is common but this needs to be qualified

7. Additionally they say that it is "severe" perhaps a better and more accurate word would be "aggressive". I agree that it can be diffuse but it particular targets the distal popliteal and trifucation vessels this should be stated.

8. Can the authors qualify " hardening" page 3 2nd para

9. I do not think that the author can categorically state that TBI's are unaffected by MWC this is repeated several times throughout the text

10. Do the authors have any information regarding ABPI's for the study subjects to compare both correlation and reliability data

11. There are too many illustrations please select the most appropriate or combine

12. When discussing the wide range of results the authors have not considered to mention the effect of vasospacity and post occlusion hyperaemia by repeated inflation of digital cuffs. This could account for the poor CV unless this was accounted for in the methodology but this was not apparent.
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'