Reviewer's report

Title: The foot posture index, ankle lunge test, Beighton scale and the lower limb assessment score in healthy children: a reliability study

Version: 1 Date: 24 October 2011

Reviewer: Cylie Williams

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Major

• The Oxford Ankle Foot Questionnaire for Children (OxAFQ-C) is an excellent tool to identify the level of disability related to the ankle and foot. It would be beneficial for the readers who have not heard of this tool before to be supplied with a better introduction to the tool and justification of why this tool has been chosen within this study. As the author’s have already introduced the need for validity and responsiveness, reference to these features in regard to the OxAFQ-C within the Introduction would assist the reader again to understand the value of this tool. Lastly, within the Procedure, the use of the parent and child version is described, these components should be also briefly expanded within the Introduction.

• In reference to the lunge test description given by the author’s, when Bennell et al described the use of a standard inclinometer, it was placed on the on the flattest area of the long axis of the Achilles tendon. The authors description of the “inclinometer held on the anterior surface of the tibia” needs more accurate anatomical description or a photo of how the measurement was obtained.

• Inclusion criteria was listed as children between the ages of 7-15 yet within the discussion there is multiple references to “the sample population of 10 year old children” and limitation of “only using 10 year old children”. It should be made clearer this is the mean age of the sample population as in it’s current description appears contradictory to the inclusion criterion.

Minor

• Within the Introduction, the authors discuss the use of “generic standardized measurement tools or heath-related quality of life measure” and describe their inefficiency due to the inclusion of many items. This is a very broad statement and while mostly accurate, not reflective of a small number of paediatric specific standardized assessments and quality of life tools that have good reliability and specificity (ie: PedsQL, BOT – 2 subtests etc). Perhaps it would be better to propose many tools have limited use or have not been tested in relation to foot problems. It is suggested that this statement be amended to not suggest inefficiency of all.

• Throughout the article the OxAFQ-C is referred to as the Oxford Foot Ankle
Questionnaire and given the abbreviation of OFAQ yet within the abbreviations this is listed as the Oxford Ankle Foot Questionnaire and given the abbreviation of OAFQ. The correct name for the tool is Oxford Ankle Foot Questionnaire for Children and the abbreviation of OxAFQ-C given by the makers. The response sheets also have individual abbreviations that may or may not be introduced within this article.

• While the authors have cited a Cochrane’s review for the common associations of paediatric flat on page 4, 4th paragraph, individual references for each association should be given to enable the reader to attain further information directly from each individual article.

• The descriptive information about the OxFAQ-C is repeated in a very similar manner within both the Introduction and Participants sections and does not add to the information needed within the Participants.

• Page 5: “Bennell has established the reliability…” should read “Bennell et al has established the reliability…”

• Page 7: Insertion of make/model of digital inclinometer is required along with appropriate reference. Referenced superscript number 9 in relation to this statement is inaccurate and the paper cited has no mention of the use of inclinometers.

• Page 7: 0.75 should read 0.75

• Page 9 & 10: Reference citations for Portney and Watkings levels in superscript

• Page 11: Missing citation signified by (XX)

• Reference 20 Spelling error in title and amendment of reference style

• Amend to consistency within references of font sizes and abbreviations of journal titles

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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