Reviewer's report

Title: Physical therapies for Achilles tendinopathy: systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 12 January 2012

Reviewer: Nicola Maffulli

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Major Compulsory Revisions

This is a well written manuscript on a topical subject, with immediate clinical interest.

The issue of the histopathological nature of overuse tendon conditions should be better characterised. Though the hypotheses put forward by Cook et al seem to indicate that the end stage pathology may well be degeneration, the main pathological appearance is of a failed healing response (see Arthroscopy 1998; 14(8):840-3 and 2009 :37(9):1855-67). Also, the issue of inflammation as a primum movens of the tendinopathy process has been put forward by Murrell, expanded by Cook et al, and formalised in other recent work (Int J Immunopathol Pharmacol.2011;24(1 Suppl 2):45-50; Sports Med Arthrosc. 2011;19(3):213-7).

The authors should briefly expand on the above issue, and include the appropriate references.

Mention should be made that, in studies performed outwith of Scandinavia (see the RCTs by Rompe et al), the rate of success of eccentric exercises is nowhere near as high at those performed in that part of the world. This is confirmed by other longitudinal studies which, given the exclusion criteria adopted by the authors, were not included in the manuscript.

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'