Reviewer’s report

Title: Screening for foot problems in children - is there either rhyme or reason?

Version: 1 Date: 27 April 2012

Reviewer: Cylie Williams

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. It has merit in relation to the current practice of podiatry in Australia and I am glad that the author has addressed it in such a manner. I hold very similar views to the author so I am keen to see this published.

1. No major compulsory revisions.

2. Discretionary revisions

While the author has introduced the concept in terms of the WHO screenings for health problems, consideration and acknowledgment should be given to the fact that the use of screening and screening principles are also part of health promotion interventions that the Ottowa Charter and later the Jakarta Declaration promotes for population health impact. In terms of health promotion, the use of screening is a downstream or individual interventional approach, it is often something that podiatrists have had funding body pressure to apply within the public sector. This is especially the case when health promotion has caped organizational funding and podiatrists are required to conduct health promotion strategies, often with poor/little training. The longevity of health promotion initiatives is based on upstream/system approaches of which screening isn’t. With this in mind, I think there is importance in acknowledging that while screening also sits within the WHO Health promotion framework, it has been shown to have minimal behaviour change and positive health impact. This would improve the argument against screening for those who may chose (and yes there are some) to believe the principles of health promotion for population health change override the WHO criteria for screening, the later being a separate health intervention rather than one that is overlaid by the Ottowa Charter.

The introduction of health promotion principles may make the issue more complex but I believe it would further strengthen the author’s argument against screening.

3. Minor Essential Revisions

Otherwise, I only have minor recommendations for changes that I would encourage the author to consider to improve the readability by providing or improving referencing. to allow the reader delve further into the subject if they chose.

Consideration of the title change to reflect the literature that has been reviewed,
ie: Screening for foot problems in children – is this a practice supported by the evidence? or something along those lines.

Abstract:
Line 4: I am unsure what the authors means by “repeated models”
Last line: change "in" to "for"

Page 5:
Paragraph 2
Clarification should be made on who this has been reported to – ApodA SA or Podiatry Council or Podiatry Registration board etc?

Page 6:
3rd paragraph:
Reference link required for AHMAC Framework
Reference 7 only relates to TB, no reference given for cancers.

TB, Breast, Cervical and Bowel Ca screening sections
No referencing for each of the above screening sections, please provide if this information has come from one or many documents.

Page 8:
Provide reference for WHO screening definition. The introduction of the development of WHO principles of screening by Wilson and Junger (p10) may be better placed at the introduction to this section within on page 8. This is also where I would suggested a brief description and recognition of the principles of health promotion and the use of screening as part of healthy populations.

P11:
References 10-14 – this sentence contains a number of conditions, it would assist the reader to have each attributed to each conditions as not every article is related to every condition.

P15
References 10, 31, 35-37 – again this sentence contains a number of conditions, it would assist the reader to have each attributed to each conditions as not every article is related to every condition.

P 21 - 1st paragraph 10% not 10percent
I am not sure if was a formatting error or something in the process, none of the figures were labeled. I am presuming in the uploaded version, this will be corrected. There was also 2 within Figure 4, I believe these should be separated into two separate figures.

References: Some references have additional fields within them ie: Reference 5,
7, 8, 42, and others have full journal titles rather than abbreviations. From review of the author guidelines, these should be abbreviated: 1, 13, 19, 22, 36, 52,

**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 I have no competing interests