Reviewer’s report

Title: Unknotting night-time muscle cramp: a survey of patient experience, help-seeking behaviour and perceived treatment effectiveness

Version: 1 Date: 5 January 2012

Reviewer: Marco Alessandro Minetto

Reviewer’s report:

In the manuscript entitled "Unknotting night-time muscle cramp: a survey of patient experience, help-seeking behaviour and perceived treatment effectiveness" Blyton and Colleagues reported quantitative and qualitative results of a pilot-tested survey about muscle cramp performed in a group of 80 cramp prone adults. The Authors concluded that “night-time calf cramps are a common problem” and that “case-control studies are required to explore the causes of night-time muscle cramp and to identify therapeutic targets”.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

My primary concern is that it is not clear what question this study seeks to address (or to solve). Please, add a clear research question and hypothesis.

Another major concern is that the manuscript contains no new information about cramp epidemiology, etiopathogenesis, pathophysiology, treatment. The variety of the cramp descriptions is indeed not a new finding. The same applies to the wide variety of the interventions used to prevent or treat cramp occurrence. It is also widely accepted that quinine derivatives should be avoided for routine use in the management of muscle cramps because of the potential of toxicity (see Katzberg HD, Neurology 2010: this recent and relevant review should be quoted by the Authors). The Authors should try to highlight the novelties of their results: the younger age of the cramp onset in the investigated subjects compared to previous studies does not add information for the understanding of cramp pathophysiology as it is simply the result of variability between the samples of different studies.

The Authors stated that “Interpretation of some findings is constrained by limitation of the survey” and that “There is great uncertainty and disagreement among sufferers regarding the cause of night-time calf cramps”. I agree: muscle stretching is always effective for cramp extinction if it is properly performed and cramp pathophysiology is still poorly understood (this is true not only for patients but also for researchers). Please, delete obvious information and try to highlight the novelties of the study.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

Table 1. What do the reported numbers represent? Percentages? Please, clarify.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS
Please, include the meaning of the following acronyms in the list of abbreviations: TGA, PBS, IQR, CI

**Level of interest:** Reject as not of sufficient priority to merit publishing in this journal

**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