Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 15 February 2012

Reviewer: Kevin Miller

Reviewer's report:

General Comments:
Thank you for the opportunity to review the paper revised by Blyton and colleagues. While the authors are commended for making many revisions to the paper, ultimately, I believe the design of the study (i.e., using subjects who were self-medicating) and lack of interpretation of the findings limits much of the usefulness of these data.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. The authors state in the beginning of the discussion section that most participants were experiencing some help from treatment and that the frequency and severity of cramp could be higher if current treatment were withdrawn. I concur with this statement. However, I believe such an acknowledgment poses as a significant limitation of the current study and casts doubt on the accuracy of their data (e.g., pain, soreness, etc). As a result, these data do not describe the experience of people with nocturnal cramping per se, but rather the experiences of those who cramp and self-medicate.
2. I find myself asking the question “Why?” still as I read much of the discussion section. In fact, much of the discussion section reads like the results section. There is little explanation or speculation on the importance of these data or how these data shed light on the cramp problem. For example, the authors discuss the age to first cramp on p13 yet offer minimal explanation for why cramps occurred earlier in this sample as opposed to others in the literature. Could there be a pathophysiological explanation for this finding?

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Please describe what the book ends of the visual analog scale were for pain intensity (0 mm = ?, 100 mm = ?). I’m assuming that 100 meant “worst pain” but this should be clarified.
2. I do not find the calculation of CI’s for mean differences helpful. If CI’s are going to be reported, report them for the actual data rather than a calculation. I believe this makes it much easier for the reader to understand.
3. What is meant by “irregular times” (p8)?

Discretionary Revisions:
1. Remove “Source of advice” in the top of Table 2 as the title accurately reflects
the information given as rows.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.