Reviewer’s report

Title: Exercise therapy for chronic low back pain: Protocol for an individual participant data meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 27 November 2012

Reviewer: Paul Shekelle

Reviewer’s report:

I have no questions/comments prior to acceptance for publication. As the authors get into this IPD, though, I suspect they may find that most of the original study datasets aren’t going to contain all or most or more than a fraction of the variables in their Table 1. I hope to be proven wrong in this, but other than age, sex, something about work status, prior history of LBP, duration, and location of the pain, the rest of these variables (like psychosocial capacity to return to work, patient’s understanding and accuracy of their symptoms, perceived ability to do job, other psychological diagnoses, comorbidities, coffee consumption, etc.) are going to be so rarely and idiosyncratically reported that they are going to be so collinear with other study characteristics such that it will not be possible to assess their influence as effect modifier variables.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.