Reviewer’s report

Title: Prognostic factors of a favorable outcome following a supervised exercise program for soldiers with sub-acute and chronic low back pain

Version: 0 Date: 13 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Paul Bruno

Reviewer's report:

Title: Clinical variables predicting the success of a supervised exercise program for individuals with low back pain

Reviewer Report

This manuscript describes a prospective cohort study investigating the ability of several clinical variables to predict success (i.e., >50% improvement in patient-reported disability) following a 6-week supervised exercise program. Overall, the manuscript is very well-written and I do not have any major concerns regarding the study or manuscript. Below are a handful of comments and suggestions for the authors to consider to provide further clarity on certain points.

1) Study Sample: Lines 76-81 seem to indicate that only individuals with sub-acute and/or chronic LBP were eligible to participate in the program. It would be helpful to clarify that the study sample only included individuals with sub-acute and chronic LBP in the title and pertinent points in the manuscript to help researchers and clinicians appropriately apply the CPR.

2) Lines 86-87: Please provide a supporting reference for the statement: "Considering the 'rule of thumb' recommendation of 15 participants per predictor included in the final model…"

3) Lines 164-166: A participant who attended three sessions per week (18 sessions) would have had a 50% higher "dose" of the intervention compared to a participant to attended two sessions per week (12 sessions). Therefore, the lack of consistency in the number of sessions
performed per participant over the 6 weeks should be added as a limitation of the study and a
suggestion for future researchers in this area to consider in their research design.
4) Tables 1 & 2: I assume that the continuous variables reported in Tables 1 & 2 are reported as
Mean±SD, and the variables reported in the last six rows of Table 1 are reported as %. It
would be helpful to clarify this in the table legend.
5) Table 3: Since only seven variables were found to be potential predictors (Line 250), I assume
that none of the between-group differences for the variables reported in Table 3 were
statistically significant. It would be helpful to clarify this in the table legend.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
Yes

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