Reviewer's report

Title: The Effect of Manual Therapy and Stabilizing Exercises on Forward Head and Rounded Shoulder Postures: a six-week intervention with a one-month follow-up study

Version: 2 Date: 24 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Ángel Oliva-Pascual-Vaca

Reviewer's report:

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This is a very interesting study about the effect of adding manual therapy to exercise in subjects suffering from chronic neck pain and poor upper quadrant posture. The authors have performed an important effort to develop this study including a considerable follow-up, which is a relevant key for this kind of trials.

The writing of this manuscript needs to be corrected since there are too many mistakes. I have just pointed out some of the to be considered as examples, but the manuscript is full of them:

Abstract. Line 36: "Also. There were…"
Line 57: In FHP there has been seen the hyperextension
Line 59. Splendid / splenius
Line 68: there are researchers claimed considerable
Line 76: one of the most used interventions for improving musculoskeletal disorders is exercises therapy included a large variety
Line 96: there is lack of evidence showed the effectiveness of a combined treatment like MT and SE and compared it with stabilizing intervention alone on posture, function, and pain.
Line 105: This study was a randomized control trail / controlled trial
Line 258: there was not seen any difference…

The abstract, background and methods sections are quite well described. However, in the results section, in line 247, it is stated that "there was no difference between pre and post-test in the control group" with a p-value of .018. It seems that it should be corrected to 0.18.

Line 250: p=016 should be corrected to 0.016

In the discussion section, in line 317, it is stated that "it can be inferred that the statistically advantages of group 2 comparing to the group 1 in function improvement and pain reduction….". I think the advantage belongs to group 1 (MT + SE) to group 2 (SE). According to the abstract and line 144, group 1 received SE + MT, and group 2 received SE. This mistake also happens in line 357, where it is stated that the improvement in function was more effective in group 2 than in group 1.
Line 341:
Limitation 2: the fact that the manual therapist was an accredited one is not a limitation. It is obvious that the results of many interventions (especially physical interventions such as surgery and manual therapies) depend on the ability of the professional who develops them, so this limitation should be eliminated.

Limitation 3: Why do the authors state that the control group was not considered to be a peer group? I do not understand this limitation. I think it must be eliminated. According to the flow diagram, the control group is constituted by subjects who fit the same criteria than the other groups, and according to line 238, there were no differences in the characteristics of subjects for any of the variables. So I cannot understand why this group is not considered to be a peer group.

Authors are encouraged to use more recent references when possible, since many of them are not especially new.

The format of the references should be reviewed and corrected.

Flow diagram: It should be added that the photogrammetry is the reason why from 80 subjects assessed for eligibility, only 60 were randomized.

Flow diagram: the lowest blue bar should be filled showing any information. I suppose that it refers to the one month-follow-up. Anyway, it seems that it could be eliminated since it does not give new information.

Figure 2 should show the acromion point, because it cannot be seen.

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

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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