Reviewer’s report

Title: Is OperaVOX a clinically useful tool for the assessment of voice in a general ENT clinic?

Version: 0 Date: 10 Dec 2016

Reviewer: Joanne Patterson

Reviewer's report:

Many thanks for the opportunity to review this paper. It made an interesting read. I do have a number of comments / areas to address below

Introduction

Operabox is an exciting addition to the voice assessment toolbox. The introduction contains a review of the current literature pertaining to acoustic and perceptual voice measurement. My main issue is the research question - if acoustic measurements by operabox have a strong relationship to those using a stack system, what does this paper add? Could the authors be more explicit about the gap that this paper addresses?

Page 4 line 14 include a reference for this statement.

Page 4 line 17. My understanding is that there is no relationship for NHR between these systems. Please expand/include a critique here.

Methods

Details on patient selection, approach, inclusion / exclusion criteria, environment, details on recording to be included here (were vocal tasks recording in the same session / same environment?), so that the study could potentially be replicable. This section starts with results and characterises the population - please move to appropriate section. I was unclear of why the VHI was in here? Please explain its purpose or remove. For the reader, please be explicit about why you needed to assess one method using sustained vowels and the other by reading a passage. It may be worth picking this point up in the discussion
Page 5 line 18 be more specific about the time point post surgery, (results section, see above point). Do the authors think there were any issues with using the same patient twice in this sample? Please explain why the study was limited to a sample of patients going for surgery. Please mention the process by which you decided whether / if ethics approval was required for this study.

Analysis

Spearmans rank is described - are you assuming that these data are non-normally distributed / or was this tested?

Results

Please see above point regarding characterising the recruited population to this study, whether there were any exclusions, whether measurements were possible on all patients consented (these details may go some way to answer the question posed by the title - am not sure in present format the study does that).

Much is made of the correlations being statistically significant - however, correlations are best interpreted by magnitude, not p values. Please use a recognised scale to indicate the strength of the relationship such as Landis and Koch. The relationships you describe range from poor to moderate.

Discussion

In light of the relationships being poor to moderate, please tone down the discussion to reflect this - specifically pg 9 lines 20-23, page 10 lines 7-9.

The authors make a nice attempt to place findings within the current literature, page 9 line 6 onwards. In view of the magnitude of the reported correlations, some findings here supported previous results (i.e. moderate correlation between jitter and grade), but were quite different from those reported by others e.g. Martin et al. Some hypotheses as to why these findings were different would add depth to this paragraph.

The authors rightly pick up limitations regarding the single rater and recording protocol. Do the authors feel that this sample are representative of a voice disorders caseload?
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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

No

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

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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