Reviewer's report

Title: Training in ChiRunning to reduce blood pressure: A randomized controlled pilot study

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Reviewer: Joel Hughes

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This manuscript reports the results of a small feasibility pilot trial of ChiRunning for elevated blood pressure. The study was carefully designed and conducted. The results are of high interest for researchers interested in non-pharmacological blood pressure reduction techniques and those interested in the treatment used (ChiRunning).

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Please address medication use. Specifically, how many patients were taking an anti-hypertensive? Patients in the hypertensive range would be typically expected to be taking medication. However, medication effects could overwhelm the intervention effects. As this is a feasibility study, that is not a serious flaw, although future larger scale trials might need to exclude antihypertensive use.
2. Please consider the self-reported injuries in the discussion. Self-reported adverse reactions to running that limit the amount of running in which the patient engages might not really be injuries. For example, shin pains or cramping. Sore muscles can reduce motivation to run, but those are really training effects. Also, the title of the ChiRunning book implies that a desired outcome was fewer injuries, but the trial found a high rate of injuries (50%+). This is not a major flaw, but it merits discussion. Was there any sense in which the ChiRunning conferred any advantage to other forms of running? Why is the study a success in terms of feasibility if 50% of the participants have an “injury” that restricts running? I personally suspect that they were not really injuries of the type that require running to cease while they heal (e.g., for 6 weeks).

- Discretionary Revisions

1. Figures 2-4 do not add much to the report. There are no error bars and the groups look the same when printed in black-and-white. If space is a consideration, all of this information could be presented in one table.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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