Reviewer's report

Title: Consensus-based recommendations for the prescription of foot orthoses for symptomatic flexible pes planus in adults: development of the FootPROP proforma

Version: 1 Date: 10 September 2014

Reviewer: Kevin Kirby

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors need to include references to specific foot orthosis types and/or specific orthosis modifications the first time these orthosis modifications are mentioned within the paper, when at all possible, so that references to these techniques are readily available for further reading. For example, on page 6, the medial heel skive technique is first mentioned in the paper but not referenced (Kirby KA: The medial heel skive technique: improving pronation control in foot orthoses. JAPMA, 82: 177-188, 1992). On page 7, the Blake Inverted Orthosis technique is first mentioned in the paper but is not referenced until later in the paper, and then only one reference is listed (Blake RL: Inverted functional orthoses. JAPMA, 76:275-276, 1986; Blake RL, Ferguson H: "The inverted orthotic technique: its role in clinical biomechanics.", pp. 465-497, in Valmassy, R.L. (editor), Clinical Biomechanics of the Lower Extremities, Mosby-Year Book, St. Louis, 1996). The Root Functional Orthosis reference should also be included first mentioned on page 7 (Root ML: How was the Root functional orthotic developed? Podiatry Arts Lab Newsletter, Pekin, Illinois, Fall 1981; Root ML: Indications for the use of functional orthoses. Podiatry Arts Lab Newsletter. Pekin, Illinois, Winter 1982; Root ML: Development of the functional orthosis. Clinics in Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, 11:183-210, 1994.).

2. On page 5, the authors’ first sentence in the Methods section states: “This study was a Delphi survey.” Please elaborate within the Methods section what exactly constitutes a Delphi study for the readers of the Journal.

3. On page 11 and elsewhere, the term “a neutral cast pour” or “poured to neutral” is used within the text. This is improper terminology. Rather, I am assuming what the authors mean is “a vertically balanced heel” or “vertical heel balancing” of the negative/positive cast. Since most negative casts are done in subtalar joint neutral position, then the term “a neutral cast pour” is not a standard description of foot orthosis positive cast balancing techniques. The positive cast is either poured with heel vertical, heel inverted or heel everted.

4. On page 11, the term “an extrinsic neutral rearfoot post” is used. Again this is not standard orthosis terminology but, rather, the term most commonly used is “an extrinsic rearfoot post”.

6. On page 14, and in other areas of the paper, the term “forefoot supinatus” is used. Please define this term for the readers because there is much confusion with this term from one country to another.

7. On page 14, and in other areas of the paper, the term “medially deviated subtalar joint axis” is used but not referenced. This term “medially deviated subtalar joint axis” needs to be referenced for the readers of the paper (Kirby KA: Methods for determination of positional variations in the subtalar joint axis. JAPMA, 77: 228-234, 1987; Kirby KA: Subtalar joint axis location and rotational equilibrium theory of foot function. JAPMA, 91:465-488, 2001).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. On page 4, the sentence, “A customized FO is tailored for the individual based on an impression of the foot....” needs to be changed to, “A customized FO is tailored for the individual based on a three dimensional image of the plantar foot....” to reflect the fact that a significant number of foot orthoses are now being made utilizing optical scanning methods of the plantar foot.

All in all, I enjoyed this paper very much and look forward to seeing it published in the Journal. I believe this paper represents a significant contribution towards our understanding of the diversity of foot orthosis prescribing habits within Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, it would be very interesting if similar studies were conducted in other countries as well so that the variety of foot orthosis prescribing habits for symptomatic adult flexible pes planus deformities within the international podiatric profession could be better appreciated.

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.