Author's response to reviews

Title: Tendon lengthening and fascia release for healing and preventing diabetic foot ulcers: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Authors:

Sarah Dallimore (sarah.dallimore@easternhealth.org.au)
Michelle R Kaminski (michelle.kaminski@easternhealth.org.au)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof. Menz,

Please find attached our revised manuscript entitled, ‘Tendon lengthening and fascia release for healing and preventing diabetic foot ulcers: a systematic review and meta-analysis’ for consideration for publication in the Journal of Foot and Ankle Research.

We thank the reviewer for taking the time to read over our revised manuscript. Below outlines further revisions to our manuscript based on the reviewer’s comments.

**Reviewer comment:**

1. The authors have provided a descriptive analysis of the papers which are not RCTs. However, this is not clear in the abstract. The results indicate that 16 papers were reviewed and is followed by the meta analysis. This suggests that 16 papers were included in the meta analysis. There should be clarity that there were only two RCTs which were used for the meta analysis and that other papers were included for descriptive analysis due to the lack of evidence available.

**Author response:**

Thank you for your suggestion. Accordingly, we have updated the abstract to clearly reflect that meta-analysis included data from RCTs only.

- Page 2, Methods, lines 4 to 5: “Data from randomised-controlled trials were analysed using random effects meta-analysis. For all other studies, data were analysed descriptively.”
- Page 2, Results, lines 2 to 3: “Meta-analysis of two randomised-controlled trials found that…”

**Reviewer comment:**
2. The authors have indicated in their response that they included the reference number of the papers next to the author details in the table to ease cross referencing. This did not appear to be the case in the tables that accompanied the paper.

**Author response:**
Thank you for your comment. The tables in our revised manuscript did include reference numbers next to the author details in the first column. However, in case you are referring to the tables in the additional files, we have now also added reference numbers to these.

Other minor corrections to the manuscript were also made:

- Page 3, Conclusions, lines 2 to 3: “The rate of ulcer recurrence was lower…” (changed ‘is’ to ‘was’)
- Page 5, paragraph 2, line 1: “To our knowledge, there has been no systematic review and meta-analysis…” (added ‘systematic review’)
- Page 12, paragraph 1, lines 13 to 15: “which included wound haematoma (16.7% and 22.2% respectively), calcaneal gait (16.7% and 0% respectively), and a ruptured Achilles tendon (16.7% and 11.1% respectively).” (removed : and changed the order of the complications listed)
- Page 13, paragraph 1, line 6: “nature of off-loading provided by TCC.” (removed ‘the’ before TCC)
- Page 14, paragraph 3, line 2: “options for healing and preventing diabetic foot ulcers” (changed ‘ulceration’ to ‘ulcers’)
- Page 14, paragraph 3, line 5: “Armstrong et al. (1999)” (added the year after the author)
- Page 14, paragraph 3, line 7: “Mueller et al. (2003)” (added the year after the author)
- Page 15, lines 3 to 4: “Allam (2006)” (added the year after the author)
- Page 15, paragraph 3, lines 5 to 6: “the relevance of the results to clinical practice and research prioritisation were discussed” (added ‘were discussed’)
- Page 16, paragraph 1, line 2: “(i.e. those that weren’t RCTs)” (removed ‘from RCTs’)

This manuscript describes original work and is not under consideration for publication by any other journal. Both authors approved the revised manuscript and this submission.

We appreciate your consideration of our revised manuscript for publication in the *Journal of Foot and Ankle Research*. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Dallimore
Senior Podiatrist
Eastern Health

Email: sarah.dallimore@easternhealth.org.au
Phone: (03) 9955 7436 (Mon-Fri)