Reviewer’s report

Title: Vascular assessment habits of podiatrists in Australia and New Zealand: a cross-sectional survey

Version: 1 Date: 29 September 2015

Reviewer: Michelle Spruce

Reviewer’s report:

REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDELINES

To Authors

The manuscript submitted focuses upon an interesting and important area, as the global health economy shifts to the increased use of private practice for high risk PAD individuals. Moreover, the aging population and prevalence of chronic conditions such as diabetes now makes this topic timely. Consequently, I would stress that these comments are made in a constructive manner to facilitate publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions

When assessing the work the following points were considered:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   • It is considered that the title requires further refinement and the term “habits” does not appropriately capture the meaning of the investigation.
   • Moreover, the title on the PIS is different to that of the research question cited in the manuscript.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   • Greater information is required regarding the pilot phase and subsequent modifications. Of note, whilst it was stated that the pilot was administered at a CPD event is does not state the sample group or numbers.
   • Further information would have been beneficial on what constituted a “gold standard” vascular assessment. In addition, it was difficult to determine if participants were expected to fulfill an ABI if palpation of pulses, trophic changes and medical history showed no indicators or PAD.
   • Given the primary aim of the study less than 50% of the questions appear to relate to this strand (7 questions):
     “The first seven questions elicited demographic and descriptive data from the participants. Questions eight to fifteen related to clinicians vascular assessment habits and sixteen and seventeen related to provision of patient education.”
3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
• Data pertaining to the “Case Study” appears not to be discussed, thus this should be included.
• A clear justification/rationale for the selection of the questions should be provided, which is aligned to international guidelines for PAD screening.
• The data produced appears to be confusing with ABI results alternating between 34.2% and 53% - however, this could be the writing style and not the data produced.
• More detail is required regarding missing data sets as this makes comprehension of statistical analysis challenging.

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
• The figures appear to be genuine but the results they are drawn from are confusing and the statistical analysis requires further confirmation or detail to make an accurate analysis.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
• Some statements must be referenced i.e. “Podiatrists also have reported time constraints and lack of financial reimbursement as barriers in performing ABI, with approximately half of practitioners reporting using ABI regularly”
• Some references appear to be a little old and could capture some the literature in the Cochrane Library.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
• There are some bold statements which may need to reflect the limitations of the study and its ability to extrapolate to the wider profession in Australia and New Zealand.
• There is the potential that the survey conducted did not capture the aim of the study as ambiguity exists between the title given to the participants (PIS) "Vascular assessment techniques amongst Podiatrists" ] and the manuscript submitted.

7. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
• See comments above

8. Is the writing acceptable?
• Some references are required and grammatical revisions should be undertaken.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests