Reviewer’s report

Title: A survey to investigate the association of pain, foot disability and quality of life with corns

Version: Date: 11 September 2015

Reviewer: Richard Wilkins

Reviewer’s report:

Minor Essential Revisions:
For Authors

This paper addresses the impact of one of the most common foot pathologies seen in routine clinical practice is certainly relevant. There are issues throughout the paper that will need to be addressed before publication.

Background
• The reference to the incidence of foot problems is vague and the reference (1) relies on data from the 1970’s is there anything more current to support this? Please also confirm whether this really is incidence data rather than prevalence
• Consider defining what a corn is, and adding in the causes (mechanical etc). This is a foot and ankle journal but may provide better understanding if defined, or the diagnostic criteria used to identify a ‘corn’ are included in the background.
• If using of numerical referencing throughout the text either put the reference at the end of the sentence or use the authors name followed by the reference. Be consistent.
• Third paragraph: “corns can be a cause of foot pain and scalpel reduction of calluses/ corns was found” reconsider wording the paragraph as it doesn’t read well
• Fourth paragraph: is this actually part of the methods section? Again needs some work, not easy to read please consider re-visiting.
• The end of the background section does not conclude or support the need for this piece of research. The background should conclude with summary of existing research and what are your main aims. There are issues with the background and referenced literature. The background currently reads as a list of studies rather than a synthesized narrative.

Methods
• Is this a cross sectional study? Please clarify in the methods section to make it clearer to the reader for example was the information collected prior to randomisation within the RCT
• Please provide information on the diagnostic criteria used to identify a corn within this study
• On page 4, line 6 you refer to marked dermatological condition as part of the
exclusion criteria: please define in more detail as the meaning may have important implications for the generalisability of the study findings.

• In recruitment you have identified one university clinic, one NHS clinic and the general population. Can you please define what you mean by general population as it is not clear to the reader what this means. Please also provide information on how participants from the general population were approached.

• Second paragraph: “(in mm)” change to “(mm)”. It is unclear how long a time period you are asking participants to recall their pain. Is it before or after treatment, is it in the last 24 hours, or over the previous week etc. Please clarify.

• The term on the VAS score 10cm ‘unbearable pain’ used (instead of for example worst pain imaginable) as your upper anchor point is not terminology I am familiar with please consider providing a reference.

Statistical analysis

Results

• The numbering with the text is reported in a variety of ways (3 corns, one hundred and fourteen participants etc). The accepted convention is that numbers of less than 10 are reported in words (e.g. 3 corns), above 10 reported in figures (e.g. 114 participants). Consistency throughout will provide clarity and aid the reader. Please consider revising.

• Have you considered displaying more results in tables, graphs etc? It is not easy to read in the current format.

Discussion

• The authors should discuss how generalizable the study’s findings are to the general population considering the sample that has been used.

• There are no suggestions for future research, please consider adding as this would benefit the paper.

• The manuscript does not currently contain any acknowledgments of the study’s limitations. For example failure to look at footwear will have a major confounding effect, especially in regards to gender. This limitation needs discussion as do some of the other limitations.

• Similarly, please consider selection bias due to the sample used (podiatry clinics), and the effect this may have had on your results.

Conclusions

• “Foot health has associated benefits to general health, social functioning and mobility [22]. Since walking and mobility is central to healthy aging, new sources of information providing evidence are necessary to develop effective public health strategies to enhance mobility in older populations [23].”

• The first two sentences of the conclusion are not necessary in this section as they are not conclusions based on your data. Instead, please consider incorporating them into your discussion or removing. The conclusion reads much better without these sentences.
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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