Reviewer’s report

Title: The prevalence and impact of self-reported foot and ankle pain in the over 55 age group: a secondary data analysis from a large community sample

Version: 0 Date: 21 Aug 2019

Reviewer: ANGELA BRENTON-RULE

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting paper which analyses a large dataset. Overall, I think the findings are of importance in particular the impact of foot/ankle pain on function when combined with co-morbid conditions or pain in other areas/joints. However, the paper is quite hard to follow and would benefit from review as outlined below:

1. Two key concerns are the age of the dataset and the use of interrogative secondary analysis; however, I acknowledge that these have been addressed in the limitations section. In addition, the authors should consider changing the manuscript title to include the words "secondary data analysis". It is noted that in the Author Contribution statement there is reference to an alternative title "The prevalence and impact of self-reported foot pain in the over 55 age group: a secondary analysis".

2. The terminology around foot data is inconsistent. The authors have stated that the data for the foot and ankle region has been combined and a single term "foot pain" has been used. However, throughout the manuscript the authors refer to "foot and ankle problems", "foot/ankle pain problems", "foot problems", "foot and ankle related pain". Please can the authors define the outcome of interest at the beginning of the manuscript and use consistent terminology through. In addition, I would argue that joint pain, swelling and/or stiffness (reported by patients in the survey) should not be collectively described as 'foot pain' as this is misleading (as stiffness and swelling aren't necessarily painful). Therefore, the term 'foot problem' may be a better option.

3. The finding in relation to isolated foot pain is inconsistent. The abstract states, "1 in 11 reported isolated foot pain", the results sections states, "4.87 per 1000" and the discussion states "only 1 in 38 of those with foot pain having foot pain alone". Please can the authors clarify this finding?

4. Methods: (line 4 of the text) the authors mention collection of data relating to "dependency and disability" and refer to Table 1. There is no data relating to this. Please can the authors add this data or remove this in the methods.

5. Statistical Analysis: The first sentence refers to previously reported work (ref 10). Please can the authors expand this to explain further as this is important to the analysis and the reader should not need to look up this reference. Further, in the sentence, "Presence of foot/ankle pain problem, comorbidities (diagnosed by a General Practitioner (GP) or specialist and self-
report)…" The terminology used in the survey is "doctor or other health professional" - please can the authors change this to be consistent with the data. Finally, four references (12-15) are probably not needed for the logistic regression. Consider reviewing.

6. Results: (line 3 of text), please define what is meant by "older people" - is this the 65-74 age group or 75+ or both? The second paragraph is unclear and difficult to determine the meaning. Please can you review. In paragraph 6, sentence "For the task most directly associated with foot problems, …"you refer to "increase the risk" - please can you elaborate? i.e. risk of what?

7. Discussion: New results are reported in the discussion section. i.e. "The median count of reported sites of pain was 4 and the most common combination of foot pain with other joints were feet and knees; feet, knees and hands; and feet knees and hips; feet and hands". Please can this be moved to the results section.

8. Reference 8 is very old. Is there more up to date data on the burden of foot and ankle complaints son the health service?

9. Tables The title of the Table would normally be above. Table 2 includes comorbidities and hence the title should be amended to include this. Table 3 is very long and difficult to decipher. Please can this be simplified to highlight the significant results.

10. Some of the language is unclear, with some words possibly missing. Please can the authors review for readability and meaning.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal