Reviewer’s report

Title: Professional appraisal of online information about children’s footwear measurement and fit: readability, usability and quality

Version: 0 Date: 27 Nov 2019

Reviewer: Rachel Kennedy

Reviewer's report:

Overall this paper is useful in helping clinicians working with children and families to sort through the overwhelming minefield of "advice" that parents are seeking and finding on the internet. It is disconcerting that the majority of advice is coming from commercial websites that clearly have a financial interest in attracting parents to their website and trade. This paper was for the most part well-written however I do have a number of points for the authors that I trust will assist them in their revision of the paper.

In particular, the sections describing the SMOG Index throughout are not clear. The website mentioned in the methods does not clearly indicate what the SMOG Index is. Does it relate to the grade level, and if so what is a grade level of 18? Standard education only goes to grade 12 and in some countries/regions grade 13, so I am not clear what this is.

Finally, it may have been useful to also rank the top three health based websites to compare with the commercial sites in terms of the assessment criteria. However, I acknowledge that this was not within the scope of the paper.

Below are points relating to the content.

1. Page 5 first paragraph
   Line 9-11
   Should the aim be more specific to footwear fit?

2. Page 9 Table 3
   Replace the word "table" in the description for Usability with the word "tablet"

3. Page 10 first paragraph
   Line 14-16 beginning "....however when these resources..." this doesn't make sense, I can't work out how you determined that they were most commonly in the top three search results from Figure 2

4. Page 10 last paragraph
   Line 50-57 beginning "The reading ease scores..."
   What is the 3 for - end of line 53?
   Is the SMOG index, the same as the grade level (from the online SMOG reference in the methods)?
   It appears that 12 of the 15 websites had a reading ease score (SMOG Index) less than 6.9, which indicates that the content is pitched at the appropriate age level. I think the way you have described this finding "Only three resources of the 15 scored over 7 for this Index, demonstrating suitability for readers aged 12 years and above" is counter intuitive. Consider re-wording this section.
5. Page 11 first paragraph
Line 2-6 beginning "...those scoring higher in one...." The latter part of this sentence doesn't read clearly. I would add the word "validity". That is, "...and those which scored lower in task validity....reflected this in measure validity, too."

6. Page 11 first paragraph
Line 16-19 beginning "Contrastingly resources..."
However, the SMOG index for resource 3 is 8.2 which pitches the content above the average reading age of 12 years. Therefore, whilst resource 3 might have scored highly on the validity criteria, the content is pitched at an older age group that is not appropriate for lay people.

7. Page 12, first paragraph
Line 35-37 beginning "Despite the resources..." This sentence appears to contradict itself. Resources are not common...which resources? Healthcare results are top 3, accounting for 55% of accessed search results, but they are not common? According to Fig 2 Healthcare resources only accounted for 4.2% of the Google search returns. This is confusing.

8. Page 13, second paragraph
Line 19-22 beginning "Being able to access..." This sentence does not make sense.

9. Page 13 paragraph 2 line 22-25 beginning "The reading ease scores...." this statement is true for most but not all of the resources. I think this needs to be clearer.

10. Page 13, second paragraph
Lines 26-31 beginning "The highest score..." This doesn't make sense. For reading ease, the content should be pitched at less than or equal to 12 years of age; yet the authors appear to be saying that a reading age of 13-14 years is ok...."a reading age of 13-14 years of age, which implies that the content of the article should be understood". In the results section on page 10, a reading age of 13-14 years of age was described as "fairly difficult to read”. The statement here is contradictory to what was previously stated.

11. Page 15 concluding paragraph
Line 52 beginning "...content was inconsistent in terms of value is assisting footwear fit." This does not make sense. Perhaps the word "is" should be "in"?

12. Reference 6 - needs to be clearer here that this is unpublished and under review.

13. Reference 22 What type of reference is this? It is not clear where to source this.

14. Reference 28 What type of reference is this? It is not clear where to source this.
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