Reviewer’s report

Title: The compliance and effect of a stay active advice in patients with acute low back pain. A randomized controlled study.

Version: Date: 8 April 2015

Reviewer: Hannu Luomajoki

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Authors,

I have to admit that I did not like your paper. The research question is too narrow. I can only hope that you have also long term results for example of 12 months follow up to see whether your Intervention had any effects on recurrences. Otherwise only this research question is far out of wasting money (with all those MRI’s and clinical examinations by an orthopaedic surgeon).

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes, however I would argue that it does not make much sense. The only interesting point would be to see the long term results – do the more active subjects have less recurrences, say, in the next 12 months?

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
To a large part yes. I did not understand say 1 step count, whioch was told two times with diefferent numbers (abstract). I found it funny that the sample size calculations were done like you should, but then the sufficient number of subjects were not included. This was because money went out. At first around 100 subjects were all examined by MRI, which mus cost 70-80 000.- Euro, and then claim the money went out…

3. Are the data sound?
It seems, however, the research question is hardly interesting

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
Yes.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Well, I would discuss a point : one might think out a reserach question as follows : let’s take 100 subject with common flue. Then half of them would be encouraged to trink a lot of tea, and the others should only drink tea if they wanted to. Then you would see that the ones asked to drink tea (asked through an imporant doctor) did so. However you would not see any differences in
improvement of the flu. Would someone publish that?

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
No – see point 6.

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes. However, it seems obvious that no one of this research group ever published anything in this issue (according to reference list)

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Partly yes, I was confused with the day one step count….

10. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests