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: 1 Date: 10 April 2015

Reviewer: Moez Triki

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  - Although, this study needs more consistent originality, but I enjoyed reading the manuscript, however, several revisions should be considered before final acceptance.
  - The grammar of the paper needs closer attention. Overall, many sentences need rewording to improve the quality of the paper.
  - You measured the Modeled daily pain intensity (NRS) over the 7 days follow-up in patients advised to stay active (SA) in spite of pain (solid line) or to adjust activity (AA) to their pain (dashed line) advice. For me it will be more consistent in discussion if you add a statistical analysis if there is a significant difference in the same group before and after the follow up period.

- Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract:
- The abbreviation of ALBP is not mentioned at its first time of appearance.
- Please move the abbreviations of (SA) an (AA) in their adequate places, just following their definitions.
- The conclusion is not clear to me, it should be rewritten.

Introduction:
- In the first paragraph, second line, please give reference to this statement “The highest prevalence can be found in Western Europe, with almost 16 % of the males and almost 15% of the females affected”.
- It is useful to highlight if there is or not studies indicating that resting in less activity is better than that being in activity.
- It should be better to clarify more clearly the originality of the study according to literature.

Methods
- The abbreviations: MRI and STIR are not defined
- Can you mention if the battery of questionnaires covering history of ALBP refer
to any reference
- In the paragraph of physical activity in methods, the amount of physical activity is not well defined to say that stay active group was really active; moreover, it is better to specify the sports activity allowed to the patients and to eliminate sports that can aggravate the injury in their back.

Results
- The titles of figure 2 and figure 3 are so long, can you reduce it
- In the second line of the paragraph of pain intensity change trajectory in results: (Table 2, Model 1, linear term p>0.001); the value of p must be “<”

Discussion
- Sections should be included where you can state the ‘practical applications’ (how can these results be practically applied) and ‘limitations of the study’ (what were the short-comings, or methodological issues, of the study). Both these sections provide valuable information for the reader to be able to judge the outcomes of the study for themselves and help apply the information in a practical manner.

- Discretionary Revisions
None

**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, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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