Reviewer’s report

Title: A comparison of isometric, isotonic concentric and isotonic eccentric exercises in the physiotherapy management of subacromial pain syndrome/rotator cuff tendinopathy: study protocol for a pilot randomised controlled trial.

Version: 0 Date: 07 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Susanna Dodd

Randomisation method: Can the authors add detail about the practical way that randomisation and allocation concealment will be performed in this trial?

Outcome measures: Please provide more information about how each outcome measure will be quantified and summarised, e.g. categorical variables will be summarised using frequencies and proportions (and 95% CIs for these proportions), and continuous measures will be summarised using means and standard deviations, or medians and IQRs/range.

Sample size calculation: Can the authors provide means and SDs on which the effect size (of 0.66) is estimated (for the main trial), rather than stating an effect size without any justification? It may be that this effect size is unrealistic, in which case the main trial would be underpowered at 30 per group. A sample size of 12 per group for the pilot study is very small - and I am concerned that the justification of only 30 per group for the main trial is not a valid basis on which to justify such a small pilot study.

I am concerned about the wording of the second objective of the trial, namely that the trial aims to determine treatment effects in the three groups. The authors need to recognise that treatment effect sizes based on only 12 patients may suggest trends but without any degree of accuracy.

When the authors refer to statistical significance, I assume that they mean "p<0.05" rather than "p<0.5"? However, I would stress that analysis should focus on confidence interval (CIs) estimation, rather than hypothesis tests or regression analysis - I would advise that the authors state this explicitly.

"Comparison of between-group changes in secondary outcomes at each of the follow up time-points will be used to determine treatment efficacy." Authors should clarify that they will compare descriptive statistics rather than carrying out hypothesis tests.

Level of interest
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An article of importance in its field

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

Acceptable

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