

Reviewer's report

Title: The paediatric flat foot proforma (p-FFP): improved and abridged following reliability analysis.

Version: 1 **Date:** 4 June 2009

Reviewer: Jackie Campbell

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

This paper conflates the findings from two seemingly separate studies. The main focus of the paper is, as the title suggests, concerned with the reliability analysis of and subsequent amendments to a tool for use in assessment and treatment of children with flat feet. However, anthropometric data was also collected and these data are also presented. The latter do not seem to contribute to the reliability study and their inclusion is puzzling. More seriously, insufficient detail is then given on the main study. It is suggested that the paper is revised, concentrating only on the reliability study, and the anthropometric study should be written up as a separate study.

The revised reliability study should give more detail on how the original FFP was used and scored which would enable better understanding of the type of data that is being subsequently analysed. In its current form, the figures are presented with no in-text explanation or reference. The use of 95% CIs in the selection of variables to retain in the tool need to be made clearer.

Should the anthropometric data analysis be subsequently resubmitted as a separate paper, more attention should be given to the data analysis. Assertions are made with no statistical evidence (e.g. that basic measures were largely independent of foot posture across the groups, assertions of normality). Scatter plots to illustrate the stated correlations would assure the reader that the relationships were linear. Table 1 should be redrawn to make it easier for the reader to see which groups are being referred to and to compare the main descriptive statistics.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests