

### The improper use of a no-treatment group in the randomised surgical trial for subacromial shoulder pain

Sirs,

We like to bring up an important issue related to the otherwise eye-opener study by Beard *et al.* (1). The authors say that “The patients in the no-treatment group had no prescribed physiotherapy or steroid injections.” We simply fail to see why the authors chose to use this no-treatment group instead of using a ‘standard of care’ control group, in which the patients could have been prescribed both glucocorticoid injections and/or physiotherapy. We suggest that such a ‘standard of care’ group would have been more suitable, especially in a pragmatic study as the study at hand is claimed to be. Furthermore, its

use would in no way have scientifically jeopardised the hypothesis being tested. More importantly, it would perhaps have been more ethical.

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### Reference

1. BEARD DJ, REES JL, COOK JA *et al.*: CSAW study group. Arthroscopic subacromial decompression for subacromial shoulder pain (CSAW): a multicentre, pragmatic, parallel group, placebo-controlled, three-group, randomised surgical trial. *Lancet* 2018; 391: 329-38.