Reviewer's report

**Title:** Distal sciatic nerve block in patients with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 16 August 2013

**Reviewer:** Xavier Capdevila

**Reviewer’s report:**

The reviewer thank the authors for this observational study.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

The reviewer wants to highlight some concerns that deserve comments:

- Did the authors do a retrospective data study or a prospective observational study during 7 years?
- Are the patients consecutive patients?
- The patients not only received a SNB but in fact a multiple bolus SNB (SN catheter). This is really different.
- The reviewer understands that the study (data) began in 2003 but why using a Nerve stimulator in these patients? We know perfectly that all these neuropathic degenerative disease patients suffer from myelin defect or axonal injury which badly interferes with nerve stimulation possibilities (Sites et al RAPM 2003, Koff et al Anesthesiolpgy 2008...) . Ultrasound guidance is definitely better in these patients.
- The authors compared three groups totally different, without any randomisation: one group with a quite normal nerve stimulation status (10 patients), one group with a very difficult nerve stimulation (probably with a higher neuropathic disease and as such less able to suffer from surgical pain, ie Gebhard RE et al RAPM 2009) and patient refusing a SNB. We don’t know anything about the preoperative status of the patients. The difference in pain relief is not surprising for the reviewer.
- What kind of surgeries we have. Foot or Ankle surgeries are very different concerning the value of postoperative pain.
- How can the authors do to realize a lateral approach of the popliteal fossa and a cephalad direction of the needle on 8 to 10 cm??
- Why the authors accept to have in the same group a NS of the tibial nerve and of the common peroneal nerve as a target. It is perfectly known that the characteristics of the nerve stimulated interferes with the result of the final nerve block.
- Why the authors did not use a multimodal postoperative analgesia regimen?
- Why not using a PCA infusion in the postoperative period?
- Who injected the bolus of LA? A doctor, a dedicated nurse?
- The conclusion of the abstract is not in concordance with the results of the study

Minor Revisions
- Some typos (Ropivacaine 0.02 in spite of 0.2% ....)
- English editing would be necessary in some parts
- Please focus the main part of the discussion on the results

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'