Reviewer's report

Title: In-vivo visualisation of the anatomical structures related to the acupuncture points Dai mai and Shen mai by MRI. A single-case pilot study.

Version: 4 Date: 20 September 2006

Reviewer: Helene Langevin

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors have clarified the figures and figure labels somewhat. However, some problems remain:

On page 7, reference to Figures 3 and 4 appear to indicate Figures 4 and 5 instead.

The arrows on Figures 4, 5 and 6 indicate the general direction of the needle, which is helpful. However, it still takes a lot of imagination to ascertain where the tip of the needle is in the human images (while it is clearly seen in the onion and banana). Since one of the main points of the paper is that this technique can be useful to detect the position of the needle, the lack of a convincing demonstration of the position of the needle tip is a serious problem. In the text, the authors make several statements which are a bit of a stretch such as: "the tip of the needle was in contact with the superficial fascia of the abdominal internal oblique muscles". At this point, it unfortunately seems that the data presented only weakly support the authors' conclusions. Either more convincing images should be presented to demonstrate that the needle tip position can be seen clearly, or the conclusions of the paper should be limited to demonstrating the feasibility of using gold needles in an MRI scanner environment.

Page 11, Figure 4 legend: first sentence is incomplete "reconstructing using...?"

Background page 4: 1st para, lines 4-5: A more accurate statement would be: "It has been hypothesized that the initiation of the effects of acupuncture depend on several ...." since this view is still at the hypothetical stage.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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