Reviewer’s report

Title: Clinical Correlates of Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous Insufficiency in Multiple Sclerosis

Version: 2 Date: 1 October 2011

Reviewer: Miguel D’haeseleer

Reviewer’s report:

The authors address an actual topic in multiple sclerosis research. The introduction is well written and balanced between pro and contra CCSVI studies. The authors should however try to more specify their research questions.

The methodology description is sufficiently clear.

The authors should emphasize on the main results of the study which in my opinion are:
1. CCSVI diagnosis is associated with progressive MS
2. CCSVI diagnosis is not associated with EDSS
3. VIHSS is not associated with EDSS

The significant association between VIHSS and brain stem EDSS is of limited clinical value. Because of the large number of patients included in this study, the trends observed are not very relevant as they remain non-significant results. A possible association between VHISS and MSSS is not mentioned in the results.

The authors should reorganize the discussion in order to make an effort to clarify the 3 main findings mentioned above. A critical statement about CCSVI as possible cause of multiple sclerosis should be included. In our review entitled ‘Vascular aspects of multiple sclerosis’ (Lancet Neurol 2011; 10: 657–66), we provide some fundamental arguments why the CCSVI concept does probably not cause multiple sclerosis. Certain findings however may be secondary to the cerebral hypoperfusion phenomenon. The authors also state that VHISS was shown to correlate with EDSS and MSSS but this is not mentioned in the results section. In my interpretation of the final results section paragraph, VHISS was not associated with EDSS.

The conclusion of the abstract should be that the presence and severity of CCVSI in multiple sclerosis has none or very limited association with clinical presentation.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
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