Reviewer's report

Title: Towards a definition of refractory neuropathic pain for epidemiological research. An international Delphi survey of experts.

Version: 1 Date: 10 August 2011

Reviewer: Howard Smith

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Reasonable Manuscript ----
Discretionary Revisions
1) I feel that since there appears to be a strong emphasis on the the word international which is in the title, conclusions as well as multiple other places----------the authors should ---state the countries that all 19 experts are from and how many from each---- instead of stating from 8 countries including Europe, North America, Australasia------- Since it is conceivable that there was 1 from US , 1 from Australia, and 17 from six countries in Europe or other permutations.

2) The authors state that ----it is likely that our questionnaire will be capable of identifying "possible" neuropathic pain in large samples(Treede '08)------ I disagree-----although I feel it may be possible in some situations -----I do not feel that it is likely overall in all situations that clinicians will be able to show the burden of proof in lsrge samples based on your questionnaire-----

In order for " possible" neuropathic pain ---it must be established by the clinician that 1)the pain has a distinct neuroanatomically plausible distribution---, and 2) the history is suggestive of a relevant lesion or disease affecting the peripheral or central somatosensory system( causality)----

Treede et al. clearly state that "The burden of proof is on the clinician to show that a sensory or pain pattern is the result of a lesion or disease of the somatosensory system."

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