Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of Abnormal Findings on Brain Magnetic Resonance (MR) Examinations Performed as a Part of an Annual Medical Check-up: Results of Brain Docking

Version: 3 Date: 6 July 2005

Reviewer: Judy Illes

Reviewer's report:

General

July 5, 2005 (July 4, is a holiday in the United States)

This manuscript has improved considerably and I am enthusiastic to see it published. There are still some details that need attention. To expedite the process, I will try to be as specific as possible.

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

The title needs to be made consistent with the stated goal and conclusion, which in turn needs to have better internal consistency. A slight modification to the title so that it is clear the abnormal findings are evaluated for the purpose of understanding the cost/benefit (or usefulness, appropriateness) of brain docking will fix this. Consider for example, a change to: "Prevalence of ... and the Cost/Benefit of Brain Docking in Annual Medical Check-ups" or something similar. This should also be reflected in the first sentence of the Background. e.g., ... examinations, in order to assess the cost/benefit of brain docking ... 

The next point is more problematic. I still think averaging the positive findings data from the wide age range of participants in Table 2 is highly problematic. The total N of detected abnormalities was 15. It should be straightforward to divide column 1 into 1a and 1b, for example, and present the data into two clusters for age range 34-59, and 60-75. We know from the previous literature (2004 Neurology paper) that there are significant differences between younger and older groups. It is essential that we keep adding to this literature in order to improve our understanding of the problem. Combining all the data is a step backwards. My prediction is that most of the IFs are in the older, male group, but of lesser significance than those in the younger group; if so, the authors may actually have something they don't know yet. If not, the community of people working in this area and those interested need to know this for this data set. No statistics are necessary; just the more discrete breakdown.

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

The authors reply that "no malignant tumors" were selected as example that no life threatening diseases were detected. On Page 13 then, second para, last sentence, please change the sentence to: No malignant tumors or other life-threatening pathology was detected.
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 importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.