Reviewer's report

**Title:** Characteristics and natural course of vertebral endplate signal (Modic) changes in the Danish general population

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 29 January 2009

**Reviewer:** Øystein P. Nygaard

**Reviewer's report:**

This manuscript is a well performed study on Modic changes (VESC) in two well defined cohorts, and is of general interest both for radiologists and other clinicians. The methods are well described, and the results are easy to read and study in detail. I recommend that the manuscript should be accepted for publication with some minor essential revisions

1. The MR evaluation was performed by three different observers. The authors should clarify how they solve the problem with disagreement between the observers and if the observers were independent.

2. 72 persons were lost to follow up. Do they differ from the population that showed up at the 4 years follow up?

3. The number of persons with VESC in this study is much higher than in previous studies, and the majority is type 1 VESC which is in contrast to previous findings. The authors should discuss this in more detail.

4. The MRI was performed on a 0.2 T MRI system. What possible impact may the low field investigation have on the prevalence of VESC type 1 findings?

5. I recommend that more numbers are given in the abstract.

6. Figure 3 is not easy to read, may be a more 3D presentation of the figure may help??

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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