Reviewer's report

Title: Depression as a 2-year outcome predictor of lumbar spinal stenosis surgery: a prospective study of preoperative, 3-month, 6-month and 12-month follow-up phases

Version: 1 Date: 26 January 2010

Reviewer: Jeffrey Katz

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential:

The abstract must include quantitative findings. At present the REsults comprise simply of two lines of text, all qualitative.

Why did you choose to create a binary outcome? Why not take advantage of the full range of outcome scores on the Oswestry or VAS?

As in the Abstract, the REsults section of the manuscrip is too brief and not sufficiently quantitative. Please report the actual OR's associated with depression in each model and indicate whether any other variables were significantly associated with the outcome.

Major compulsory:

THese data do not support a recommendation to treat depression pre or post operatively. The data do suggest that research investigating treatment of depression in patients undergoing surgery for stenosis merits a high priority. You should address this.

Table 1: THe model building and display could be more informative. You should examine the bivariate association between depression and outcome and than the multivariate OR, adjusted for other covariates. This will provide insight into potential collinearity among different concepts (eg functional status and depression).

Explain in the table that the regression coefficient for the Stucki scores can be interpreted as Oswestry points per Stucki point.

Clearly, the Oswestry score will be predicted by pain and functional status, especially when the latter are measured postoperatively. The question raised by this research is whether there is additional explanatory value provided by depression. Can you comment on this? THe value of using depression in screening would be if it provided independent data not already offered.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.