Reviewer's report

Title: Myofascial pain in view of treating physicians is a prevalent condition whilst use and effectiveness of prescribed treatments remain discrepant: a cross-sectional, nationwide survey

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Reviewer: Joseph F Audette

Reviewer's report:

1. Title (Page 1): Consider changing to Discrepancy between prevalence and perceived effectiveness of treatment methods in myofascial pain syndrome: Results of a cross-sectional, nationwide survey

2. Page 2 under Methods: Consider changing sentence: Physicians estimated the prevalence of active trigger points, stated what treatments they use routinely and rated their effectiveness on a six-point scale (with 1 being excellent). Data are expressed as mean±standard deviation. To:

Physicians estimated the prevalence of myofascial pain amongst patients in their practices, stated what treatments they used routinely and then rated the perceived treatment effectiveness on a six-point scale (with 1 being excellent). Data are expressed as mean±standard deviation.

3. Page 2 under Results: Consider changing sentence: The estimated overall prevalence of myofascial trigger points is 46.1 ± 27.4%. To:

The estimated overall prevalence of myofascial pain is 46.1 ± 27.4%.

4. Page 2-3 under Results: Consider changing sentence: Ratings of treatment options in between specialities demonstrated differences. To:

Effectiveness ratings of the various treatment options between specialities was widely variant.

5. Page 3 under Conclusions: Consider changing sentence: Despite a variety of commonly prescribed treatments, the moderate effectiveness ratings and the frequent characterizations of the available treatments as insufficient suggest urgent need for clinical research to establish evidence-based guidelines for a better treatment of myofascial pain syndrome. To:

Despite a variety of commonly prescribed treatments, the moderate effectiveness ratings and the frequent characterizations of the available treatments as insufficient suggest an urgent need for clinical research to establish evidence-based guidelines for the treatment of myofascial pain syndrome.

6. Page 4 under Background, 3rd paragraph: Consider changing sentence:
Treatment approaches in myofascial pain range from analgesics to physical therapies. To:

Treatment approaches in myofascial pain range from analgesics to various physical modalities.

7. Page 4-5, under Background, end of 3rd paragraph: Consider changing sentence: Hence, broad clinical studies are still missing. To:

Despite the variety of treatment approaches, there is a lack of clinical evidence to guide treatment.

8. Page 5, under Background: Consider changing the sentence: Trigger point injection remains the treatment with the most scientific evidence and investigation for support. To:

Trigger point injections remain the treatment with the most scientific support.

9. Page 5, under Background: Consider changing the sentence: We therefore evaluated the distribution of the usage of frequently prescribed treatment amongst German physicians with experience in treating patients with myofascial pain and asked them for their particular rating of the treatment effectiveness, respectively. To:

We therefore evaluated the distribution of the usage and physician rating of effectiveness for frequently prescribed treatments amongst German physicians with experience in treating patients with myofascial pain.

10. Page 6, under Ethics: Consider changing the sentence: As we did neither deal with subjects’ data nor experimental research on humans was performed, ethical approval is not necessary….. TO:

As this study did not involve patient data and the research did not involve humans, ethical approval was not necessary….

11. Page 7, under Prescription rates and rating of treatment options: Consider changing sentence: Afterwards they had to rate the effectiveness of the approaches chosen due to their own opinion on a six-point scale (with 1 being “excellently effective” and 6 being “ineffective”). TO:

Afterwards they had to rate the effectiveness of the approaches chosen based on their own experience on a six-point scale (with 1 being “excellently effective” and 6 being “ineffective”).

12. Page 10, under Demographic and Participants Characteristics: Consider changing sentence: Pain therapists refer very rarely their patients to another centre…. TO:

Pain therapists rarely refer their patients to another centre…
13. Page 10, under Prescription Rates of treatment options: Typo in sentence: Pharmacological approaches were the most common treatment (1525 choices, i.e. a mean of 4.5 analgetics evaluated per physician).

Change the word “analgetics” to “analgesics”

14. Page 15 under Discussion: Consider changing sentence: To our knowledge, the present study is the first survey among physicians comprising the estimated clinical importance of myofascial pain, its prevalence and the prescription rate of present treatment options; the treatments’ effectiveness in the view of physicians was rated. TO:

To our knowledge, the present study is the first physicians survey that estimates the prevalence and clinical importance of myofascial pain and the utilization rate and physician rated effectiveness of the most common treatment options.

15. Page 15, under Discussion: Consider changing sentence: Our data suggests that myofascial pain is estimated a highly prevalent condition. TO:

Our data suggests that German physicians that treat various pain issues considered myofascial pain a highly prevalent condition.

16. Page 15, under Discussion: Consider changing sentence: In addition, rating revealed significant discrepancies regarding the treatment of myofascial pain in different fields of specialisation. TO:

In addition, our data revealed significant discrepancies regarding the treatment of myofascial pain in different fields of specialisation.

17. Page 15, under Implications for treatment options: Consider changing sentence: Hence, this controversy reflects the lack of scientific basis and available treatment guidelines. TO:

This lack of concordance between frequently prescribed treatments and perceived effectiveness reflects the lack of scientific evidence and available treatment guidelines.

18. Page 15, under Implications for treatment options: Consider changing the sentence: Consensus among researchers for defining and describing myofascial pain using concordant terminology and examination techniques is requisite TO:

Consensus is also requisite among researchers to define and describe myofascial pain using standard terminology and validated examination techniques

19. Page 16 under Implications for treatment options: Consider change the sentences: We observed that the effectiveness of some treatments requiring a special education and additional self-experience such as acupuncture, TENS, dry needling or injections. These techniques were rated controversially; especially by
TO:

We observed that the perceived effectiveness of some treatments that require specialized education and additional experience, including acupuncture, TENS, dry needling or injections varied among specialist. In general, these techniques were rated to be controversial; especially by physicians not familiar with these practical treatments.

20. Page 16, under Implications for treatment options: Consider changing sentence: While physicians in the pain congress group mainly worked in hospitals, their respective colleagues had chosen a private practice as their working place, which might reflect the differences in work experience in these groups. TO:

While physicians in the pain congress group mainly worked in hospitals, those members that had chosen a private practice as their working place rated treatments differently, which might reflect the differences in work experience in these groups.

21. Page 17, under Implications for treatment options: Consider changing sentence: This far we assume that unavailability of recommendations or expert opinions from physicians hand, is a widespread phenomenon. TO:

This suggests that the lack of availability of recommendations or expert opinions to health professionals, is a widespread phenomenon.

22. Page 17, under Implications for treatment options: Consider changing sentence: Though, those wishing to accelerate the adoption of new evidence may need to undertake more active promotion [27], in order to obtain generally accepted guidelines [28]. TO:

As a corollary, those wishing to accelerate the adoption of new evidence may need to undertake more active promotion [27], in order to obtain generally accepted guidelines [28].

23. Page 17, under Implications for clinical practice: Consider changing sentence: Yet, prescription and effectiveness of these minor used treatments in the view of treating physicians have still to be evaluated. TO:

Yet, prescription patterns and perceived effectiveness of these rarely used treatments in the view of treating physicians have still to be evaluated.

24. Page 18, under Implications for clinical practice: Consider changing sentence: There is common sense that chronic myofascial pain may be a consequence of a complex stress response that extends beyond the nervous system and contributes to the experience of pain [31]. TO:

It is commonly understood that chronic myofascial pain may be a consequence of a complex stress response that extends beyond the nervous system and
contributes to the experience of pain [31].

25. Page 18, under Methodological considerations: Consider changing sentence: We are presenting a cross-sectional nationwide study with three hundred thirty-two physicians standing representatively for the clinical specialities mainly involved in the treatment of myofascial pain. TO:

We present a cross-sectional nationwide study with three hundred thirty-two physicians that comprise the clinical specialities mainly involved in the treatment of myofascial pain.

26. Page 18, under Methodological considerations: Consider changing sentence: As we chose personal contact instead of postal distribution almost everyone asked for answered the questionnaire (response-rate > 95%). TO:

As we chose personal contact instead of postal distribution almost everyone asked responded to the questionnaire (response-rate > 95%).

27. Page 19, under Methodological considerations: Consider changing sentence: But even then, this approach would not provide an understanding of the perceived effectiveness of the prescribed treatments.

28. Page 19, under Methodological considerations: Consider changing sentence: Introducing questions on myofascial trigger points at the beginning of the questionnaire was the approach to focus the physicians understanding of the questions about myofascial pain syndrome in the same direction. TO:

We took the approach or introducing questions on myofascial trigger points at the beginning of the questionnaire to help ensure that the physician responses related to the treatment of myofascial pain syndrome rather than other soft tissue pain conditions such as fibromyalgia.

29. Page 19, under Methodological considerations: Consider changing sentence: The objective of this study was to give an overview to analyse the diversified customs of physicians for treating myofascial pain syndrome in Germany, caused by a general lack of pathophysiological understanding and treatment guidelines. TO:

The objective of this study was to analyse and provide an overview of the diversified customs of German physicians in the treatment of myofascial pain syndrome.

29. Page 19, under Methodological considerations: Consider changing sentences:

In our opinion, the questionnaire has accomplished its task. As it was a sufficient survey to answer our question no validation has to be done. TO:

Given the purpose of the questionnaire, validation is not necessary.
30. Page 20, under Conclusions: Consider changing sentence: The results of this survey demonstrate despite commonly estimated prevalence, that there is no agreement in prescribing and estimating the effectiveness of treatment options for myofascial pain. TO:

The results of this survey demonstrate that there is no agreement amongst German specialist in the utilization and perceived effectiveness of the various common treatment options for myofascial pain.

31. Page 26, under Figure 1: Consider changing sentence: Figure 1 is indicating the prescription rate of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain in the view of treating physicians. TO:

Figure 1 demonstrates the physician estimated prescription rate of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain.

32. Page 26, under Figure 2: Consider changing sentence: Figure 2 is indicating the estimated efficacy of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain in the view of treating physicians on a 6-fold scale (with 1 being “excellently effective” and 6 being “ineffective”). TO:

Figure 2 demonstrates the physician estimated efficacy of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain on a 6-fold scale (with 1 being “highly effective” and 6 being “ineffective”).

33. Page 29, under Table 1: Consider changing sentence: Table 1 is indicating the following demographic data of physicians dealing with myofascial pain: age, gender, field of specialisation, subspecialisation, employment centre and status of specialisation. TO:

Table 1 provides the demographic data of physicians dealing with myofascial pain: age, gender, field of specialisation, subspecialisation, employment centre and status of specialisation.

33. Page 30, under Table 2: Consider changing sentence: Table 2 is indicating the estimated importance of myofascial pain in the general population on a six-point scale (with 1 being a “very common problem”). TO:

Table 2 provides the physician estimated importance of myofascial pain in the general population on a six-point scale (with 1 being a “very common problem”).

34. Page 30, under Table 2: Consider changing sentence: Additionally it indicates the estimated prevalence of active trigger points in the view of treating physicians in the general population and their respective patients in percent (%). TO:

Additionally the physician estimated prevalence of active trigger points in the general population and their respective patients in percent (%) is given.

35. Page 32, under Table 3: Consider changing sentence: Table 3 is indicating
the prescription rate of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain in the view of treating physicians. TO:

Table 3 indicates the physician estimated prescription rate of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain.

36. Page 34, under Table 4: Consider changing sentence: Table 4 is indicating the estimated efficacy of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain in the view of treating physicians on a 6-fold scale (with 1 being “excellently effective” and 6 being “ineffective”). TO:

Table 4 indicates the physician estimated efficacy of different therapeutic options in the treatment of myofascial pain on a 6-fold scale (with 1 being “highly effective” and 6 being “ineffective”).