Reviewer's report

Title: Self-reported cold sensitivity in normal subjects and in patients with traumatic hand injuries or hand-arm vibration syndrome

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Reviewer: Noriaki Harada

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Self-reported cold sensitivity in normal subjects and in patients with traumatic hand injuries or hand-arm vibration syndrome

This paper suggests that the hand-arm vibration syndrome patients have abnormal cold sensitivity affecting their work capacity and quality of life, the level of which is more severe than that of hand injury patients. Although the study method using self-report questionnaires has the following limitations, the results seem to be informative.

Major points

1. The multiple comparison procedure for the Mann-Whitney U-test may be necessary; if it was performed, the concrete method must be described in the data analysis section.

2. Limitation from the response rates of patients and normal subjects which were not so high, together with the effects of dropout subjects, might be better to be discussed more.

3. The effect of gender difference on the results is not discussed enough; the male/female ratios are not same among three groups.

4. The effect of age difference is discussed to some extent as the CISS score is not affected by age; is it too optimistic?

5. We can guess that all patients with the HAVS investigated in this study have ‘white finger’; it may be better to describe exactly and to indicate the HAVS stages, such as Stockholm workshop scales including sensory-neural symptoms.

6. The location of the symptoms like ‘numbness’ and ‘aching and pain’ etc should be expressed in the text.

7. The following sentence in the last paragraph of P5, ‘A reference material (normative data) ......Sweden (www.hrql.se)’, must be described properly in the appropriate place. It is also better to add reference/s for the term ‘mean deviation from norms’.

8. Ref 6 is not an accepted paper for publication at present; it must be described exactly. Ref 24 must have its journal name.
Minor points

1 Abbreviation of ‘visual analogue scale question’, VAS question, must be described at P5 L8.

2 At P10 L4-5 from bottom, ‘PWES’ should be used instead of ‘Potential Work Exposure Scale’.

3 The bar for ‘HAVS’ in Fig 1 is not completed.

4 The values of ‘q1-q3’ for ‘swellings’ in Fig 2 must be properly set.

5 The ‘CI’ must be explained exactly in Fig 4a/b.

**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.