Reviewer’s report

Title: Gray-scale ultrasound volar and dorsal additive scores follow the trend of disease activity in rheumatoid arthritis

Version: 5 Date: 6 April 2011

Reviewer: David E Feinstein

Reviewer’s report:

I apologize for such a long delay. Overall, I will say that there are many improvements to this article, particularly from a grammatical standpoint. The figures and graphs are much clearer to me and better depicted.

I like the addition of the Doppler settings very much and agree with her overall comments.

RESULTS Section:
1) The first sentence "...and separately VES respectively DES" reads awkwardly.
2) Would it be visually pleasing to include the prevalence of synovitis (91%) for the wrist in the bar graph? And reference the graph or figure (I didn’t see reference)
3) 35,7% - still parts of article that contain commas where there should be periods. Again, commas in last few paragraphs of Results section.
4) In 5th paragraph Results section, the numbers don’t match the table; i.e. 382 in article; 383 on table
5) Use of "whilst" is uncommon in American literature.
6) Again, I am not comfortable with statistical analysis. Suggest different reviewer to analyze stats.
7) In Discussion, "US data have a higher significance when they are accurately..."; Do you need to know higher significance compared to what?
8) Very minor typing error; need space between 0.5-2mm; i.e. 0.5-2 mm = grade 1; same for grade 2; grade 2 & grade 3 change to grade 3.
9) Discussion: Awkward 1st sentence paragraph 4. Maybe change to "Our results are consistent with literature of the volar side showing a higher percentage of positivity on GSUS, but also on PDUS.
10) Discussion: paragraph 5; Awkward paragraph beginning with second sentence. Also, "Except for the wrist, different scores..."; should 'scores' in this sentence be changed to the word 'trials'? I am not understanding sentence. And did the different scores or trials use MCPs 2,3,5, PIPs 2,3 and MTPs? Needs better clarification. The sentence of "We found positivity prevalence of MCP4 comparable to MCP3 or 5, probably because of volar synovitis contribution" is awkward sentence. Whole paragraph probably needs clarification and revision.
11) Images were changed to MCP joint, but picture of hand/probe is that of a PIP joint. (Probably doesn't matter much, but could be confusing when correlating it with image).

12) Discussion last paragraph with "- more distant from the joint comparative with extensor tendon..." also is awkward sentence.

13) Conclusion paragraph: Awkward sentences grammatically. ? "as it also correlates with all signs of RA activity...". "Scoring both dorsal and volar synovitis to reflect disease activity in RA could be the best option for the sonographer." Not sure if you need "However,..." following that sentence. Last sentence is very awkward.

The Conclusion paragraph needs re-wording; I made suggestions but feel free to change sentences to make it more clearer to reader. Also, since the conclusion paragraph was re-worded as per Dr. Naredo, make sure that it matches the objectives and title of the paper as best as possible.

14) "-are warranted"; there are many parts of the article that contain dashes and I'm not sure if they are being utilized properly from a grammatical standpoint.

15) Table 3 may need further clarification (either in article or below the table) - I apologize if this was explained in article, but I don't recall reading it this time around.

Again, paragraphs related to Pearson's coefficient should be reviewed by someone with a better statistical background for authenticity and accuracy.

DF

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests