Reviewer's report

Title: Is the presence of Modic changes associated with the outcomes of different treatments? A systematic critical review

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Reviewer: Laxmaiah Manchikanti

Reviewer's report:

The authors have performed a systematic review on the presence of Modic changes associated with the outcomes of different treatments. Unfortunately, this is a subject without multiple studies. The authors should consider taking “systematic critical review” out of the title for the reason outlined in the next paragraph.

Overall, only 6 studies were eligible for inclusion criteria. That essentially shows that this is not a well studied subject. That also makes this being a systematic review moot. The studies are quite heterogenous, with one lumbar epidural steroid injection study, 2 intradiscal steroid injection studies, one lumbar disc displacement study, one fusion surgery study, and one exercise therapy study. Further, none of the studies showed any significant improvement.

The authors also have done a methodologic quality assessment with an instrument I am not familiar with. They have not quoted a reference. While it appears appropriate, the only comment I have is has this instrument been validated or utilized in other studies?

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

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.