Reviewer's report

Title: Aging enhances serum cytokine response but not task-induced grip strength declines in a rat model of work-related musculoskeletal disorders

Version: 1 Date: 22 January 2011

Reviewer: Roberta Bonfiglioli

Reviewer's report:

The objective of the study is to improve the understanding of the effect of repetition and force on musculoskeletal tissues and peripheral nerves using a rat model; the results are of clinical importance as they can contribute to increase our knowledge of the usefulness of serum biomarkers to detect early onset and follow the progression of work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

Discretionary Revisions

Authors should better specify in method section (see page 5 lines 19-21) if also the young animals were female rats; possible confounders should be eventually discussed.

Authors reported that animals reached more frequently than requested and that they were allowed to self-regulate their participation in task performance (see page 8). Did age influence the reach rate, and consequently the actual overload? Differences in exposure between young and aged HRLF groups should be discussed, if recorded.

Minor Essential Revisions

Figure 3 legend - “naive” instead of “niave”
Page 12 line 7 - “anti-inflammatory” instead of “ant-inflammatory”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests