Reviewer’s report

Title: Hypermobility of the first metatarsal bone in patients with rheumatoid arthritis treated by Lapidus procedure

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Reviewer: Andrea Marinoszi

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well structured paper on an interesting issue, with a notable sample size. Nevertheless should suggestions could be helpful to clarify the content and better explain the relevance of the paper.

Introduction
I suggest to shorten this section and give references, please

Materials and Methods
We suggest to better specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The authors consider only the inter-metatarsal angle values and the CM instability, with no any mention to associated deformities, frequently observed in rheumatoid patients (i.e. instability or degenerative changes to the mid-foot/hind-foot joints), which would be considered as exclusion criteria. A heading entitled “surgery” should be included. In addition, the authors do not mention to any statistical test.

Results
I suggest to consult a statistician to calculate the significance of their reported findings, especially when they compare pre and postoperative AOFAS scores, pre and postoperative intermetatarsal angle measures. In addition it should be interesting seeing if reported findings changes by using different fixation systems (K wires, staples, screws) and in patients undergoing additional procedures to the allux (14 cases) or other toes (45 cases in which the Lapidus procedure was combined with the second through fifth MTT head resection using the transversal plantar approach; 11 cases undergoing a Weil osteotomy on the second through the fifth MTT bones; 25 cases of hammer toes in which the head of the phalanx was resected).

Discussion
Well written and explicative. However, results should be better discussed after having consulted an expert statistician. “We recommend using the procedure as a preventive surgery in case of progression of forefoot pain in patients with rheumatoid arthritis”. This sentence should be rewritten. As the authors discuss, this procedure could be the first choice in poorly symptomatic patients; I consider this treatment should be indicated in subjects with marked instability of the CM joint.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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