Reviewer's report

Title: Pain Drawings in Somatoform-Functional Pain

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Reviewer: Peter Henningsen

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper with theoretical interest but also potential clinical diagnostic usefulness. The authors describe differences in pain drawings between two different groups of pain patients, those with somatoform/functional and those with somatic-nociceptive pain. They conclude that three drawing criteria yield the most sensitive combination for distinguishing these two groups of patients.

The topic is important and interesting and the paper is carefully written. However, there is one major problem requiring, in my view, major compulsory revision, if this is possible at all. (1) The two groups of patients are different in so many ways that statistical control of some of these differences does not seem to be sufficient to justify attribution of the demonstrated differences in pain drawings between the groups primarily to differences in diagnostic type of pain. The patient groups were recruited in completely different clinical settings, we have no sociodemographic information beyond age (vastly different) and gender, one group has nearly 90% psychiatric comorbidity, the other not at all, duration and intensity of pain are vastly different etc. In addition, the Odds Ratios partially are so high that this might indicate problems of the data and/or artefacts. The authors need to justify in detail why they think it might be justified to draw the conclusions they draw despite the vast differences between the groups not only in diagnostic type of pain.

Minor revisions: (2) the authors should state the interrater reliability of their assessment of pain drawings. (3) The selection of covariates should be based on tests, not on expectations (page 5/6) (4) They should justify their decision to exclude patients with psychiatric comorbidity in one group, but not the other, thereby enhancing the differences between the groups.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.