Reviewer's report

Title: Early increase in serum-COMP is associated with joint damage progression over the first five years in patients with rheumatoid arthritis

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Reviewer: Xu Shengqian

Reviewer's report:

I think major compulsory revisions in this paper should be made before a decision on publication can be reached.

1# Why didn’t the paper have group of control (normal) in research design? Differences of serum COMP between RA and control should be studied at inclusion, after 1, 2 and 5 years.

2# It is well-known that changes in serum levels of COMP in arthritis reflect processes in the cartilage. Were alterations of serum-COMP in RA at 1, 2 and 5 year follow-up observed by author associated with damage of cartilage or joint damage progression? It was not interpreted in this paper and there were not any detection involved loss and damage of cartilage, either.

3# Some NASIDs such as diclofenac can influence cartilage in RA, so category of NSAID should be listed in this paper and associations between changes of serum-COMP and suspicious NSAID should be discussed.

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

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.