Reviewer's report

Title: Correlation of lateral stenosis in MRI with symptoms, walking capacity and EMG findings in patients with surgically confirmed lateral lumbar spinal canal stenosis

Version: 1 Date: 9 June 2014

Reviewer: Johann Steurer

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. The authors evaluated the significance of lateral lumbar spinal stenosis (LLSCS) and enrolled 14 out of 88 patients with lumbar spinal stenosis. It is not explicitly specified if these 14 patients only had LLSCS or also, at least some of them, a narrowing of the central canal.

2. Had some patients a LLSCS on more than one level? A table showing the results would be helpful for the reader.

3. The authors do not report at which time the patients were enrolled in the study? If he last patient have undergone surgery at least 6 months ago the authors could (should) report on the postoperative course of the patients. How many of the patients improved after surgery, was the proportion of patients with improvement after surgery different in the groups with normal and abnormal EMG-findings?

4. Authors used the term “clinical significance” of an LLSCS identified by MRI to describe the purpose of the study. It is for me not clear what this term really indicates. What the authors can evaluate or demonstrate is the association between MRI findings and EMG findings. Does “clinical significance” indicate that the identified lesions, conditional on the EMG findings, are causal for the symptoms of patients? Authors should explain the meaning of “clinical significance” in the context of this study.

Minor essential revisions

Fourth paragraph in the results section; F-responses were normal in 13 patients, abnormal in 14 patients and in 1 patient was missing … This must be mix-up between patients and roots, I assume.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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