Reviewer's report

Title: Retrospective comparison of three different plates for fixation of distal fibular fractures

Version: 1 Date: 10 May 2014

Reviewer: Boonsin Tangtrakulwanich

Reviewer's report:

Major points:
1. Study design is not a case-control study. It must change into retrospective cohort study.
2. Sample size needed to be calculated based on preliminary result and primary outcome.
3. Since the number in each subgroup according to Weber classification is limited, and the author had no hypothesis to test whether each classification gave the different outcome, so I would suggest pooling the data together and analyzing according to each treatment group.
4. Primary outcome should include healing rate, healing time or time to return to work.
5. The author must have the data regarding medical record completeness.
6. In result part, the author must summarize the data from the table not to repeat it.
7. In discussion part, the author should add the additional limitation including potential selection and evaluation bias from the study design.
8. Conclusion must be based on the new statistical analysis.

Minor points:
1. Title: Comparison of three plate system for lateral malleolar fixation.
2. English: a number of miss spellings throughout the manuscript.
3. Figure should be more clearly labelled.
4. A bit more detail regarding OMS and AOFAS should be added in M/M part.
5. Reference: but format and accuracy must be rechecked.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published.

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' below.