Reviewer’s report

Title: Bovine Explant Model Of Degeneration Of The Intervertebral Disc

Version: 1 Date: 19 November 2007

Reviewer: Wiltrud Richter

Reviewer’s report:

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

# Authors mention in the introduction that it is virtually impossible to inject fluid into a healthy bovine disc. In the methods section, enzyme solutions are injected and 1 day later FBS. The authors fail to provide the injectable volume for this step and, thus, the total amount of administered papain or typsin remains unclear. This data needs to be provided as well as the reproducibility of this step in different discs.

# Three samples per treatment were studied. Were they of identical size (same IVD of distinct animals) or derived from the same animal? Please specify.

# Due to the low sample number (n=3) no statistics was applied (see methods section). How can the authors then report on a significantly reduced glycosamioglycan content (abstract line 17)?

# Authors provide figure legends for figures 5 and 6, but no figure 6 is provided. Text, figure and legends need to be adapted accordingly.

# Page 9: Authors mention little differences between time points and recommend to use the shortest interval. This passage is unclear. For trypsin treatment, 1 week seemed to produce less effects on % CS / dry weight than 2 and 3 weeks. Since trypsin activity is already stopped after 1 day by FBS, what do the authors mean when they recommend to use the shortest interval?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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