Reviewer’s report

Title: Histometric data obtained by in vivo confocal laser scanning microscopy in patients with systemic sclerosis

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Reviewer: Dr EF Bernstein

Level of interest: not specified

Advice on publication: Other (see below)

1. Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown: if not, what are the shortcomings and could they be overcome?
yes

2. Are sufficient details provided to allow replication of the work or comparison with related analyses: if not, what is missing?
Yes, nothing is missing

3. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition: if not, in what ways?
Yes, good control groups

4. Is the writing acceptable? (nb. Since we do not charge for access to published research, we cannot undertake the costs of editing poorly written papers. If you tell us that the writing is not acceptable for publication, we will ask the authors to find someone, or an editing service, to help them rewrite it. If you tell us that the paper is too poorly written for it to be peer reviewed, we will ask them to rewrite it now.)
Yes

Comment 1. The authors use an interesting research tool and apply it to patients with scleroderma in an
attempt to discern features that distinguish the disease and perhaps give a clue to the state of disease in a particular patient. They identify an interesting finding of an increased thickness of the dermal papilla superior to the first dermal papila vessel. My only suggestion is that they should perhaps correlate these findings with historical histopathologic data. I understand the reluctance to biopsy these particular patients. This is a good contribution to the literature and a start at sorting the data from this interesting instrument.

**Competing interests:**

None declared.