Reviewer's report

Title: A double-blind, randomized controlled, prospective trial assessing the effectiveness of oral corticoids in the treatment of symptomatic lumbar stenosis

Version: 4 Date: 3 June 2014

Reviewer: Tetsuryu Mitsuyama

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In abstract, P#0.05 is unnecessary. (P2L21)
It is better to be consistent in “lumbar canal stenosis”, instead of “spinal stenosis”.
The authors should show the results and tables of followings that they mentioned in key points and conclusion.
1. There is no relation between the diameter of the vertebral canal and the patients’ pain and limitation.
No direct correlation between the degree of stenosis on MRI and symptom severity or quality of life as revealed by the Roland–Morris Questionnaire and SF-36. Lumbar stenosis at L4/L5 is more symptomatic compared with stenosis at the other evaluated levels.
2. Obese patients with canal stenosis are more symptomatic than thin patients.
BMI was directly associated with the degree of limitation and inversely associated with quality of life.
“{1.5 [EN]}” and “{3.4 [EN]}” are unintelligible. (P5L7-8, PL)
How about “by 3.14 as pi”? (P5L9)
(MLGs) is unnecessary. Is it GLM? (P5L18)
What are “modest differences”? (P7L3)
What are “different instruments”? (P7L10-11)
It is better to show the correlation between BMI and RM-Q in result and table. (P7L13)
The paragraph of spondylolisthesis in discussion seems to be unnecessary. (P9L3-11)
It is better show a discussion about the reason why oral corticoid was not effective, although local corticoid was effective.
It is difficult to conclude that the inflammation is not important for symptom from this study.

In table 1, median values and standard errors are unnecessary. Numbers of significant figures in multiplication and average are equals to least numbers of diameters.
In table 2 and 3, graphs are much more comprehensible. The author should pay more attentions to significant digits.

**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.