Reviewer's report

Title: Recurrent knee arthritis diagnosed as juvenile idiopathic arthritis with a 10-year asymptomatic period after arthroscopic synovectomy: a case report

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Reviewer: Toni Hospach

Comments to authors:

The case report describes diagnosis and treatment of a patient with juvenile idiopathic oligoarthritis.

No diagnosis was made for 10 years despite chronic synovitis. Synovectomy was performed at the age of 2 years and again at the age of 12 years; after that mtx was started.

As the course of the treatment and diagnosis is not state of the art the following has to be discussed and critically mentioned in the discussion in order not to suggest that this is a usual work up for JIA patients.

1. What was the idea of synovectomy at 2 years of age? Diagnosis, even preliminary?
2. Was an intraarticular injection of steroids performed? Why not done?
3. Why was methotrexate commenced in oligoarticular disease? This is not appropriate
4. Was the patient ever seen by a pediatric rheumatologist?
5. As JIA is associated with uveitis? What was the result of slit lamp examination?
6. Was the child between 2 and 12 years ever seen by a pediatrician or rheumatologist? Was subclinical arthritis excluded?
7. Arthroscopic synovectomy is not the primary step!! This should be stressed
8. ...children who suffer from chronic joint swelling have to be seen by a rheumatologist, who follows these patients, does clinical and imaging work and laboratory (ANA). Eye exams!
9. Treatment is not controversial in regards to surgical therapy. This is at the very far end of recalcitrant treatment.
10. Very old literature (1, 2)
11. Arthroscopic biopsy is not essential for the diagnosis

The paper is worth publishing when it discusses the not appropriate treatment regarding initial and second synovectomy, methotrexate treatment, lacking visits of rheumatologist and eye examinations and extensively presents and discusses the role of synovectomy in JIA: describe exactly the results of these studies, the potential benefits, the time point in therapeutic procedures.