Reviewer's report

Title: Fibroblasts from phenotypically normal palmar fascia exhibit molecular profiles highly similar to fibroblasts from active disease in Dupuytren's Contracture

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Reviewer: Nazli McDonnell

Reviewer's report:

1) The manuscript is generally well written and organized.
2) It does ask scientific questions relevant to translational medicine.
3) The study design is good. However, it is not clear to me that patients undergoing Carpal Tunnel surgery are great controls. The results would be more impressive and pertinent if truly normal controls were used. However, getting surgical samples from healthy subjects is not an easy and feasible proposition, and the question asked with this approach (ie using the CT samples) also has the potential to answer distinct and relevant questions.
4) The microarray study seems methodologically sound and the statistics seem robust.
5) The findings support that there is a genetic predisposition to aberrant proliferation in the DC patient fibroblasts even though they appear phenotypically normal. This leads to the proposition that pharmacological treatment to prevent recurrence may be possible in those patients who have already developed DC, if targets are identified.
6) The pathway analysis discussion to be the area where this manuscript could be improved. The discussion is vague and does not explore potential treatment targets. I would have liked to see an improved discussion about the role of B-catenin and more informative explanation of identified signaling pathways.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests