Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparative clinical characteristics of neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorders with and without spinal cord atrophy

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Reviewer: Mickael Bonnan

Reviewer’s report:

This article deals with spinal cord atrophy (SCA) in neuromyelitis optica (NMO). 2 large groups of patients are compared with and without SCA. Progression index did not differ between the two groups, but the SCA group have mainly higher EDSS at onset and longer disease duration.

Biological differences in two groups are commented and authors suggest that the higher general inflammation is predominant in the SCA group and may be targeted to halt neurodegenerative processes leading to SCA.

SCA is a major problem in NMO, since spinal cord atrophy drives impairment. Predictive factors of SCA are welcome and this article gives insight in this problem. Authors emphasized the eventual role of microinflammation which a new but personal and putative hypothesis. However, plasma exchange and early steroids are recognized to change the prognostic of severe relapses. Data about these major parameters are omitted and should be added.

Title is sound but english should be revised.

Major compulsory revision

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests