Reviewer’s report

Title: The added value of musculoskeletal ultrasound to clinical evaluation in the treatment decision of rheumatoid arthritis outpatients: Physician experience matters

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Aaron Garza

Reviewer's report:

The authors of this manuscript assessed the added value of musculoskeletal ultrasound to the clinical evaluation in the treatment decision of RA patients and they reported that MSK US added to standard rheumatic assessment impacted the treatment proposal in a limited number of patients and the impact was greater in a the less-experienced rheumatologist

The subject area is of interest and the manuscript in general is well written but I do have a few comments

It is well known that MSK US is operator dependent, the only experience that we know about the rheumatologist performing the studies is that ‘they completed a 12 hour course in MSK US in rheumatic disease’, at the same time, the MSK US findings (synovitis, erosions, etc) that were reported in this study were comparable to other RA studies suggesting knowledge/expertise in the area from the operators

Regarding the conclusion, I would consider modifying to a more specific RA population as the majority of the RA patients did not have a moderate or high disease activity level

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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