Reviewer's report

Title: Transabdominal laparoscopic retroperitoneal neurectomy for chronic pain after inguinal hernia repair and appendicectomy - a matched-pair study.

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Reviewer: Hobart Harris

Reviewer's report:
I commend the authors for tackling an important but difficult problem in general surgery, that of chronic inguinodynia following groin (hernia) surgery. The authors report their experience with nine (9) patients who underwent transabdominal laparoscopic retroperitoneal selective laparoscopic neurectomy for chronic pain over approximately 2 years. The manuscript is clear and reasonably concise with a thoughtful analysis and discussion section. Unfortunately, the authors appear wedded to the presentation of data comparing QoL and pain scores between the 9 patients with chronic groin pain and a "matched" control group of patients who had undergone similar primary surgery without developing chronic postoperative pain. This comparison adds nothing to the manuscript and should be eliminated. As previously noted by another reviewer, a more appropriate control group would be either patients with chronic groin pain treated medically or those treated via another neurectomy technique (laparoscopic retroperitoneal or open). The presented comparison reveals the obvious; patients with chronic pain following abdominal surgery have a lower average QoL and more pain than patients who undergo abdominal surgery and do not consequentially develop chronic pain. The paper would also be more informative if the authors provided more details regarding how they determined exactly which nerves to cut, including the use of EMG or percutaneous nerve mapping/tracking.

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.
No

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.
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