Reviewer's report

Title: Searching for success...: Development of a combined patient-reported-outcome ("PRO") criterion for operationalizing success in multi-modal pain therapy

Version: 5 Date: 8 June 2015

Reviewer: Christopher Harle

Reviewer's report:

This revised manuscript is significantly improved. The authors have undertaken a number of additional analyses that strengthen the contribution of their methodology. The revised manuscript is also clearer, more focused, and more appropriately addresses study limitations, including the preliminary nature of their criterion.

Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Minor Essential Revisions

1. I think it is worth mentioning in the discussion, both as a limitation and future direction, the potential to extend your approach to measuring success to reflect individual patient preferences and/or goals. For example, a more appropriate measure of success might be one in which the patient achieves an individually chosen level of improvement on the dimensions that are most personally relevant to him/her.

2. A number of sentences use awkward phrasing and/or contain typos. Please review throughout the paper. For example, see line numbers 28, 229, 273, 343, 344.

3. Please include a citation for the imputation algorithm described on line 139.

4. Line 529: I would eliminate the word “hint” in describing the significant relationship between treatment success and lack of a pending disability claim. The statistical significance is still present despite the fact that your variable selection approach did not include this variable in the original model. It is still reasonable to mention that it was found on sensitivity, but I disagree with the use of the word hint.

5. Please edit your table p-values so they do not read “.000”. Instead use “<.001”

Discretionary Revisions

6. I find the terms “succeeds” and “non-succeeds” to be awkward. Consider “successes” and “non-successes”
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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.