Reviewer’s report

Title: FULL TITLE OF MANUSCRIPT: The utility of ESR, CRP and Platelets in the diagnosis of GCA

Version: 0 Date: 23 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Susan Goodman

Reviewer’s report:

This paper aims to assess the sensitivity and specificity of ESR, CRP, and platelet counts in the dx of GCA. Overall, this is a worthwhile effort, as the diagnosis can be difficult and as discussed, there is urgency in making a diagnosis that makes use of simple tests important, but there are problems in the analysis that need strengthening.

Introduction- minor

1. with the first official description dating as far back as 1932- awkward phrasing

2. The detailed information about the role of platelets in inflammation doesn't add much as this paper is about its diagnostic properties- that section should be shortened, and perhaps the difficulty in diagnosis and important in making a diagnosis should be discussed- that's really what this paper is about

Methods- major

1. Need clear criteria for the diagnosis of GCA- was it just the treating MD's assertion? Were there specific items that were taken from the chart review?

2. It would be informative to compare the values for CRP, ESR and Plts for the biopsy positive vs. negative group, sensitivity analysis?

3. While the age and gender are comparable for the included vs excluded patients, were the rates of TAB also considered? Proportion positive?

4. Inclusion of other inflammatory conditions in the differential diagnosis of GCA would be helpful in determining the specificity of the tests.

Discussion-

1. The conclusion introduces imaging methods that aren't mentioned I the body of the paper and are just confusing when introduced in the conclusion
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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