Reviewer’s report

Title: Halo Score (Temporal artery, its branches and Axillary artery) as a diagnostic, prognostic and disease monitoring tool for Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA)

Version: 0 Date: 26 Mar 2020

Reviewer: Thomas Daikeler

Reviewer's report:

This is well written protocol to further assess prognostic value of imaging in GCA.

some comments
1. on a single vessel level; reduction of on a 3-scale qualitative scoring system of the TA and the larger arteries had not shown in a retrospective analysis any correlation of reduction of vessel wall and relapse or on cumulative steroid dose was seen (Aschwanden M, Schegk E, Imfeld S, Staub D, Rottenburger C, Berger CT, Daikeler T.Rheumatology (Oxford). 2019 May 1;58(5):792-797Vessel wall plasticity in large vessel giant cell arteritis: an ultrasound follow-up study) so you might consider including more patients if the correlation is weaker
2. The score does not take into account the intensity of inflammation in one vessel segment (1 segment score 3 scores identical as three segments score 1 each) both scenarios are essentially not the same
3. How do you handle asymptomatic patients in remission with increasing Halo score during the FU examinations? this might be of importance especially under TCZ

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.

Unable to assess

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

Unable to assess

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

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?
6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal