

PRESUBMISSION REVIEW REPORT

5/2/2012

ABCDE-X

This report indicates the areas of improvement in your manuscript. The reviewer's comments will help you to address the weak spots in your manuscript and highlight its strengths so as to improve the probability of acceptance by the target journal.

In this report we provide an overview of your manuscript followed by detailed comments on improving each section in the manuscript. We then list ratings on the quality of research and of the manuscript. We also provide comments on the suitability of publishing your manuscript in the journal you have selected, along with concrete next steps.

Presubmission Review Report

ABCDE-X

OVERVIEW

Title: XXXX

Word Count: 5432

Number of Figures: 4 (not given for review)

Number of Tables: 2

Target Journal: Journal of Orthopaedics

URL: <http://www.jortho.org/>

GENERAL COMMENTS

The study has a good basis and presents interesting findings. Regarding specifics, the Title reads fine but needs minor revisions (detailed below). The Abstract requires revisions to improve grammar, spelling, word use, style, and sentence structure. The journal guidelines suggest that abbreviations should not be used in the Abstract and the Title. The assay systems should be described in more detail rather than simply abbreviated. Aside from the types of revisions described above, the Introduction provides readers with a good overview of the field and clearly defines the study's aims. The Methods require significant revisions to the construct section as noted in detail below. I strongly suggest that a diagram be included to illustrate the constructs' structures and how they were derived. The Results are presented logically but required a great deal of editorial attention as described above. The Discussion provides an informative account of the advantages of the author's system and provides strong support for its importance in future studies on clinical application.

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DETAILED REVIEW OF EACH SECTION

Title Page

The Title's word order, grammar, and style should be revised to make it immediately comprehensible to readers. Unless there is some clinical significance regarding the artist's expertise, "semiprofessional" should be deleted from the Title. Further, summary statements are not included on the Title page. Please check this and make revisions accordingly.

Please provide your email address and check to make sure the city is correct for each institution. The template also requires phone, fax, and URL.

Abstract

The Abstract does not comply with the journal requirements. It exceeds the journal limit of 200 words, and should be divided into the following headings: Purpose, Methods, Results, Conclusions. The description of the methods could be more succinct; there is some verbiage that could be eliminated. Remove all abbreviations as per the guidelines.

The abstract needs to also be followed by 4–6 key words for indexing purposes.

Introduction

A good introduction to the scientific issues, but more could be said about the possible general medical/therapeutic implications. Also, the first two sentences appear to have the same meaning at first glance; you might want to revise to emphasize that risk for C5 palsy is increased in patients with degenerative cervical disease. Further, writing that the correlation between C5 palsy and degenerative cervical disease is unknown may be an overly extreme characterization. On the other hand, if you state "unclear" you imply that there may be conflicting studies or studies whose data are difficult to interpret. But not that supporting references would be required for such cases.

Methods

The methods and materials are carefully and fully described for most parts, with the exception that the identification of the materials and instrumentation should also include the city name of the producer. Data collection procedures are clearly discussed for the variables extracted. Regarding the drug regimen, please state the dosing frequency because others are expected to repeat your therapeutic regimen. Did the patients take levodopa until 2009? Also, the drug given at 600 mg is not stated. Is it levodopa as in the revision? Further, although what you are describing is perfectly clear, you cannot literally elevate a drug concentration except in the sense that if you had a sample you could elevate it to the top shelf of your lab bench. You can state that you can measure "elevated (or decreased) levels." Finally, please consider explaining why you did not determine drug levels systemically or centrally, because it is unclear if the differential effects you observe in your patients is attributed to this.

Results

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This paper focuses on pediatric cases, and the results section states that methyl-CpG-binding protein 2 mutations account for a significant proportion of cases of autism in children, especially when a strong prepotent or habitual tendency is present, suggesting that this disease is an underrecognized entity in the pediatric community. It seems that you are attempting to make the point that this disease is more prevalent than it would seem. However, the text does not make this as clear as it could. Please consider making a revision that will make it easier for readers to understand this important point.

Further, to provide as much information as possible to the reader about the extent of differences, please specify how groups 1 and 2 were significantly different and how much. For example, "Disease frequency in group 1 was x% larger than in group 2" or "Group 1 children showed increased disease incidence at thrice the rate of Group 2 children." It is very important for the readers to know the direction (smaller, lesser, greater, larger, etc.) and the magnitude of differences (%difference, how much fold, how many times, how much fold, etc.) where possible.

Discussion

The Discussion appropriately considers previous work in comparison to the authors' research here. This fascinating study would also benefit significantly if it could provide readers with a concise overview of the current state of disease diagnosis with special reference to the earliest diagnostic markers and whether any genetic tests have come on-line or are in the works. Readers will welcome your speculation regarding the length of the average "latency" period for disease onset versus first definitive diagnosis. If you can state unequivocally that manifestations of dysfunction of the higher visuospatial system can indicate this disease five years earlier than now possible, this may have a very significant impact. Other than this, the present results have been discussed adequately in general, but does not consider its weaknesses in enough depth so as to anticipate criticisms from peers and readers alike.

Conclusion

The Conclusion appropriately summarizes the study and presents the findings in a concise manner. However, although readers will be able to conclude that the behavioral and neurodegenerative changes occurred before dopamine therapy, this should be clearly stated in the Conclusion section. This is on the basis of the assumption that the therapy was instituted after these changes.

References

References should be provided here even though they will be a subset of those already cited. This will make it easier for readers to find the cases. Please make sure that "treated by laminoplasty alone" is correct. The sentence following this remark notation does not accurately reflect the results reported in reference #8.

Figures

Figures were not provided along with the manuscript.

Tables

The journal's instructions require that, "In the Results section, concisely summarize the study findings..." The deleted section repeats data in the Tables. You may wish to consider revising the previous two sections similarly. But because they are brief, this may be acceptable to the journal's editor.

Format

Please check journal formatting guidelines especially regarding writing out numbers <10, units, hyphenation, paragraph, heading and subheading styles, statistics, and source information. The journal also requires a "Disclosure" statement: "Include a section in the paper in which you state whether a potential conflict of interest—financial, personal, or professional—exists or could be construed as existing." Please refer to the journal instructions for more details. In addition, spaces at the beginning of paragraphs should be replaced by indents where appropriate, and Figure and Table titles and legends should be formatted according to journal style.

Style

I recommend using a short abbreviation for "MN-ZLW-002-fermented milk" (like "MN-FM") since it has been used many times in the document. The journal is a British publication; ensure to revise the language style to British (namely spelling and punctuation).

QUALITY OF RESEARCH

Rating	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Originality of research	x				Other than the studies noted as references, I did not find equivalent work in PubMed or Google Scholar.
Significance to field	x				The author commendably does not exit the proposition to bring in criticisms outside its boundaries.
Contribution to existing knowledge	x				This is a worthy advancement of the arguments in the field.
Soundness of study design			x		
Sufficiency of data analysis		x			
Overall Rating		x			

QUALITY OF MANUSCRIPT

Rating	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Clarity of presentation			x		Some sentences are unclear. Overall language needs to be improved.
Organization and Structure			x		The Introduction section should be divided into paragraphs. The Results and Discussion sections can be combined as the journal allows it.
Evidence supports conclusion	x				The conclusion is adequately supported.
Adequacy of literature review		x			More references should be cited.
Overall Rating		x			

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SUITABILITY TO JOURNAL

	Journal Information	Article Suitability
Scope	The target journal seems to accept scholarship covering a range of subjects. I see little in previous editions of the journal concerning Japan, however. This could be a plus for this manuscript if the editors perceive it to be an addition to their coverage and a minus if they feel the manuscript is too geocentric.	The article seems generally “suitable” for this publication in the sense that the editors are open to unpublished scholars. The journal does not, however, seem to publish an abundance of biostatistical work.
Focus	The journal doesn’t seem to have a specific focus, as it publishes work in a variety of fields. Because of the journal’s generality, however, I believe the author might receive feedback on the specific methods used. The major contribution is purely empirical and seems to have little involvement with actual biostatistical fluctuations.	I believe the article would benefit from placing greater emphasis on what clinical implications arise from your research. Or, barring this, you should emphasize what new considerations your work brings to the study of healthcare statistics. This clear declaration of focus would give the journal editor a hook on which to hang a decision to publish the work.
Coverage	The journal seems open to topics of varying kinds and has not really carved out a specific field of coverage.	
Quality	The methodology in the manuscript seems solid and persuasive. You will need to justify your choice of constant, and given the comments by previous readers, indicate why you are not addressing such issues as medical data management and hospital statistics.	

Additional Comments

Your study is based on self-reported methods and recall ability, which may have led to errors because of subjectivity and recall bias. Please consider discussing such limitations or shortcomings, and if warranted, specify the next step according to you, e.g., experiments or studies to be conducted next.

MANUSCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

Three most important improvements that the manuscript needs:

1. The subjects are described properly, but the groups into which they are divided are not clarified. The groups are indeed mentioned in the Abstract, but that does not suffice. They are first mentioned without clear definition in the subsection Induction of Cortical Spreading Depression.
2. The statistical analysis is properly described, but the identification of the software used for cluster analysis should include the version number and the producer.
3. Bulleted lists that explain results are inappropriate in a journal article. Findings should be written in paragraph form. Also, the author needs to delete all conclusions in the separate sections and only discuss the research and its implications in the conclusion.

Three most important strengths of this paper that should not be lost:

1. The very complete analysis of the changes in gene expression.
2. The clear details of the experimental procedure.
3. Comparison with previous results, and a good discussion of previous literature.

Current publication status and next steps:

The first draft is ready and the target journal is selected. The overall flow of the manuscript and writing style should be corrected before publication.

Our expert suggests the following services based on the analysis above:

- Advance Editing (<http://www.enago.tw/advance-editing.htm>)