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Epidural/perineural injection

In the paper by Krämer et al. regarding a new technique for epidural/perineural injection [1], the authors cite Derby in their reference list. I have looked for this reference and there is no paper by Derby in the volume of spine referred to. I would appreciate a correct citation in order to review this particular paper.

I would also like to comment on some confusion in the text. In the materials and methods section, the authors describe the epidural/perineural versus epidural conventional study as the first trial. They indicate that the epidural/perineural: steroid versus saline study is the second trial.

The authors report a 68% excellent or good result for the epidural perineural/injections (first trial). Al-

though they give no percentages, their graph in Fig.5 indicates a good response in 54% of the epidural/perineural corticosteroid group (second trial).

In the discussion section, the authors explain that some training is necessary to perfect the technique and that this might account for the percentage of good results in the second trial (epidural/perineural versus conventional at 68%) as compared to the first trial (epidural/perineural steroids versus saline at 54%) which was apparently conducted when they started the new technique. This is confusing as they have reversed the trials. This is further confusing as the authors indicate the trial with epidural/perineural steroids versus saline was "when we started with this new technique", yet earlier in the text, they indicated they had been performing the procedure for the past 3–4 years with over 600 cases and that their results were sufficiently

good that they felt there was a need for a well-constructed study.

Finally, the authors make the point that they did not employ imaging (CT) on a routine basis, indicating that it was useful for educational reasons, scientific documentation, difficult cases, or for the individual learning curve. It would certainly be useful to know exactly how often CT guidance was employed in those cases involved in the two trials.

These are significant issues, as the topic is of great interest and this paper may well be incorporated in the future literature addressing the use of imaging guidance for performance of these types of procedures.

Reference

1. Krämer J, Ludwig J, Bickert U, Owczarek V, Traupe M (1997) Lumbar epidural perineural injection: a new technique. *Eur Spine J* 6: 357–361

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