Primary Sjögren's Syndrome
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Comment on ‘Diagnostic accuracies of sialography and salivary ultrasonography in Sjögren’s syndrome patients: a meta-analysis’ by Song and Lee (2014)

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We have read with great interest the recently published meta-analysis by Song and Lee [1] in your journal regarding the diagnostic properties of sialography and ultrasonography in Sjögren’s Syndrome (SS) patients. A systematic review and meta-analysis on this topic has been lacking so far from the literature, and thus eagerly expected. We would like to express some concerns regarding Table 1 of their study in relation to the study outcomes. There seems to be a discrepancy between the data shown in the meta-analysis and the data presented by the source studies [2-7], viz.:

1. In the study of Takagi et al. 2010 [2], the number of cases with SS is 188 as opposed to 177 reported by Song and Lee [1].
2. In the study of Obinata et al. 2010 [3], the number of cases with SS is 36 as opposed to 32 reported by Song and Lee [1].
3. In the study of Poul et al. 2008 [4], the number of cases with SS is 45 as opposed to 32 reported by Song and Lee [1].
4. In the study of Salaffi et al. 2008 [5], the number of cases with SS is 77 as opposed to 68 reported by Song and Lee [1].
5. In the study of Yonetsu et al. 2002 [6], the number of cases with SS is 171 as opposed to 151 reported by Song and Lee [1].
6. In the study of Yoshiura et al. 1997 [7], the number of cases with SS is 24 as opposed to 23 and the number of controls is 40 and 41 depending on the diagnostic technique tested, as opposed to 21 reported by Song and Lee [1].

With regard to the sums of true positives, true negatives, false positives, and false negatives, it is essential that the correct number of participants in the source studies is entered in the calculations [1]. Finally, Song and Lee report that discrepancies between reviewers were resolved by consensus or a third reviewer [1]. However, they fail to present who the third reviewer was. It might be that there was no need for a third reviewer and do not report inter-observer agreement measures.

We were wondering which numbers were entered in the statistical program to perform the meta-analyses, since these numbers influence the outcome of the study. We would appreciate it if the authors could comment on the above raised issues.

Table 1: Overview of the data presented in the source publications and the data presented by Song and Lee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source publications</th>
<th>Data from source papers</th>
<th>Data reported by Song and Lee (2014)</th>
<th>Sialography</th>
<th>Ultrasonography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS  CO  SUM SS and CO</td>
<td>SS  CO  SUM SS and CO</td>
<td>TP  FP  FN  TN  SUM sialography</td>
<td>TP  FP  FN  TN  SUM ultrasonography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takagi et al., 2010</td>
<td>188 172 360</td>
<td>177 172 349</td>
<td>146 31 42 141 360</td>
<td>154 50 34 122 360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obinata et al., 2010</td>
<td>36 37 73</td>
<td>32 37 69</td>
<td>30 2 6 35 73</td>
<td>28 8 8 29 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poul et al., 2008</td>
<td>45 15 60</td>
<td>37 15 52</td>
<td>35 2 6 13 60</td>
<td>38 4 7 11 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaffi et al., 2008</td>
<td>77 79 156</td>
<td>68 79 147</td>
<td>56 12 21 67 156</td>
<td>58 13 19 66 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yonetsu et al., 2002</td>
<td>171 123 294</td>
<td>151 123 274</td>
<td>149 2 30 121 302</td>
<td>130 7 41 116 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoshiura et al., 1997</td>
<td>23 21 44</td>
<td>23 0 1 21 45</td>
<td>11 1 13 21 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SS: Sjögren syndrome patients, CO: Controls, TP: True positive, FP: False positive, FN: False negative, TN: True negative, *: 19 nonspecific parotitis and 21 healthy volunteers, **: 19 nonspecific parotitis and 20 healthy volunteers.
References


