

Review of: "Why is vertebral pneumaticity in sauropod dinosaurs so variable?"

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Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

I have read over the above manuscript and I find it a nice demonstration that insightful conclusions can at times be achieved with simple tools and observations when good ideas are explored. Though I am not an expert in the field of dinosaur palaeontology, as highlighted by previous reviewers, the authors' main thesis appears as well-funded and corroborated by neontological observations (and thus likely to be correct). I only have a few (minor) suggestions that might prove useful for making the paper even more palatable for a 'generalist' reader.

1. The authors often state that "bone is usually the least variable material in the vertebrate body" (or similar sentences to the same effect, e.g. in the Introduction). Such statements risk to appear as somewhat vague, and as such, they might result in a broad range of interpretations (and misinterpretations as well). I would suggest the authors to apply some rephrasing in order to make these statements more to-the-point and unambiguous.
2. In the Introduction, you might consider adding 1-2 sentences (with adequate literature references) about the possible function of vertebral pneumaticity in sauropods. I acknowledge that this is of little if any relevance for the issues dealt with in your paper; anyway, it might prove useful/interesting for a 'generalist' reader.
3. In my opinion, Figure 1 would become more informative and easily 'readable' for those outside dinosaur palaeontology by adding left and right lateral views of the depicted vertebra with no superimposed red-shaded areas.
4. In Figure 2, a close-up of caudal vertebrae 4–6 in left lateral view could also be provided (that is not necessary anyway). Furthermore, in case a pic has been mirrored, this should be stated explicitly in the figure caption.
5. As regards the first paragraph of the Discussion, could you please add a reference for supporting the occasional presence of a triple transverse foramen in human cervicals? Is that observation also after Travan et al. (2015)? Please specify.