Sonographic imaging may help to diagnose inflammatory CTS, which would be more likely to respond to local corticosteroid injections. After exclusion of these patients with inflammatory CTS, the success rate for surgical interventions may be even higher.

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In Reply: Dr Bleecker states that we should have excluded individuals with work-related CTS. We doubt that absence of exposure to ergonomic stressors in the surgery group is the major reason for the difference in success rates between the groups. In our study, only 28% of the patients in the surgery group and 37% in the splint group indicated that their complaints might have been due to their normal daily activities, including work. Furthermore, absence from paid labor (during the whole trial) was only 12 days on average in the surgery group.

Dr Johnson suggests that nerve latencies are not the best measure for the diagnosis of CTS. Although we also measured amplitudes, the inclusion criteria were based on the current protocol of the Dutch Association of Clinical Neurophysiology. The primary outcome measures used in our study were subjective, as these are the most appropriate for clinical practice. Although we obtained data on grip and key pinch strength, Semmes-Weinstein monofilament testing, and nerve conduction parameters, none of these objective measures correlated with the patients' subjective ratings. We believe that this renders the objective measures less helpful for effect evaluation.

We agree with Dr Menkes that surgery might be beneficial for asymptomatic MNW with significant nerve conduction abnormalities. However, we do not have data to support this because such patients were not included in our study. Although we could analyze the patients in the surgery group with a prolonged baseline distal motor latency to determine if progression was prevented by the treatment. However, it is not possible to analyze progression of distal motor latency in patients with a prolonged baseline distal motor latency and treated by splinting alone because these numbers are so small.