Abstract:
Quantitative sensory testing (QST) is the standardized assessment of the somatosensory system comprising all sensory submodalities. In the German Research Network on Neuropathic Pain (DFNS), a QST-battery consisting of 13 parameters has been established and nationwide normative data have been collected. In contrast to conventional electrophysiology, QST allows detecting negative and positive sensory signs of both large and small fiber systems. However, as a subjective psychophysical method it is critically dependent on patients’/healthy subjects’ cooperation thus strictly standardized protocols and instructions are needed to allow across laboratory comparisons. To facilitate more widespread use of QST, the German Pain Society (DGSS) and the DFNS have initiated a certification procedure for QST quality standards. Therefore, structural, procedural criteria and outcome parameters were established and are hereby presented. By maintaining high quality standards, the certification of QST is intended to contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms behind neuropathic pain syndromes and thereby improve patient care as well as sensory assessment in clinical studies on the treatment of neuropathic pain syndromes.