

Reviewer's report

Title: Lewy Bodies and neuronal loss in subcortical areas and disability in non-demented older people: A population based neuropathological cohort study

Version: 1 **Date:** 10 February 2009

Reviewer: Yunhwan Lee

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

- None.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. It appears that the ADL and IADL instrument the authors used is an abridged version (only 3 ADL and 3 IADL items). Traditional items, such as toileting and eating, are not included. Please give more details on the ADL/IADL instrument, supporting it as a validated tool.
2. In the text, the authors state that using the toilet is included in the instrument, but does not appear in the table (Table 1).
3. The assumption that "functional disability is unlikely to improve" is not well-grounded. Refer to Hardy and Gill's paper (JAMA 2004;291:1596-1602). Is it possible that misclassification bias has been introduced?

Discretionary Revisions

4. It is possible that ADL/IADL is not a sensitive tool for detecting early changes in the brain structure. Assessment of functional limitations, a pre-disability state, that include muscle strength, upper and lower body mobility, and balance, may better serve to reflect early brain changes.
5. Coming back to the point on the progression/reversibility of disability, it would be interesting to investigate, longitudinally, whether changes in disability states over time are correlated with pathologic changes.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.