Reviewer's report

Title: The prognostic importance of a history of hypertension in patients with symptomatic heart failure depends on the diastolic (but not systolic) function.

Version: 2 Date: 29 February 2012

Reviewer: Paul Steendijk

Reviewer's report:

1) Only about 30% of the pts had transmitral flow measurements done. This may have introduced a bias towards including patients suspected of inflow abnormalities. Please comment.

2) Hypertension (history) was defined as current or previous antihypertensive treatment. This is a somewhat suboptimal because patients with controlled HTN will be included, but pts with untreated HTN are not.

3) The manuscript title mentions 'diastolic function' but the study merely determined mitral inflow deceleration time, which obviously is not the same. I think this is somewhat misleading. To some extend the same holds for the term 'systolic function' in the title since this is based on EF only (which in this populations may have its limitations as a marker of systolic function).

4) In line with the previous comment, I feel the limitations of deceleration time as an index of diastolic function (or even of restrictive filling) deserves some more attention. You mention that increased RV pressure may lead to short deceleration time. However pseudonormalization is case of delayed relaxation and/or high filling pressure is not discussed.

5) The study uses all-cause mortality as a primary end-point. However, the study group is likely to have a high prevalence of comorbidities. Please discuss.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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