Reviewer's report

Title: Birth weight and the risk of atrial fibrillation in whites and African Americans: the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study

Version: 1 Date: 23 March 2014

Reviewer: Adolfo Correa

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Discretionary revisions

1. The authors should consider using the “medium” or average BW category as the reference group in data analysis and presentation of findings rather than the low BW category for at least a couple of reasons. One is that the average BW is the largest group and this alone justifies using it as the norm or reference group. This average BW group is also the usual reference group for most studies of categories of birth weight, making for reasonable comparisons across studies. The upper limit of high BW in this study is not defined and is likely to differ from study to study, making sensible comparisons of findings across studies difficult if not impossible.

2. The low prevalence of low birth weight in this cohort seems odd and may suggest some selection bias but could also reflect in part the exclusions in this study. The authors might comment on the low prevalence of low birth weight or how this prevalence compares with that observed in other cohort studies of chronic diseases and how possible exclusions might have impacted on the results of the study.

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.