Reviewer's report

Title: Passive Tobacco Exposure Impairs Symptomatic Improvement in Patients with Chronic Angina Undergoing Enhanced External Counterpulsation

Version: 1 Date: 28 November 2007

Reviewer: Rohit R Arora

Reviewer's report:

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

IN VIEW OF THE ANALYSIS OF A REGISTRY, AND THEN EXAMINATION OF A SUBGROUP, THE FOLLOWING SUBGROUP STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND METHODS SHOULD BE INCORPORATED, IN ORDER FOR THE PAPER TO BE ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION:

In the abstract:

Present subgroup results in the abstract only if the subgroup analyses were based on a primary study outcome, if they were prespecified, and if they were interpreted in light of the totality of prespecified subgroup analyses undertaken.

In the Methods section:

Indicate the number of prespecified subgroup analyses that were performed and the number of perspecified subgroup analyzes that are reported. Distinguish a specific subgroup analysis of special interest, such as that in the article by Sacks et al., from the multiple subgroup analyses typically done to assess the consistency of a treatment effect among various patient characteristics, such as those in the article by Jackson et al. For each reported analysis, indicate the end point that was assessed and the statistical method that was used to assess the heterogeneity of treatment differences.

Indicate the number of post hoc subgroup analyses that were performed and the number of post hoc subgroup analyses that are reported. For each
reported analysis, indicate the end point that was assessed and statistical method used to assess the heterogeneity of treatment differences. Detailed descriptions may require a supplementary appendix.

Indicate the potential effect on type I errors (false positives) due to multiple subgroup analyses and how this effect is addressed. If formal adjustments for multiplicity were used, describe them; if no formal adjustment was made, indicate the magnitude of the problem informally, as done by Jackson et al.

In the results section:
When possible, base analyses of the heterogeneity of treatment effects on tests for interaction, and present them along with effect estimated (including confidence intervals) within each level of each baseline covariate analyzed. A forest plot is an effective method for presenting this information.

In the Discussion section:
Avoid over interpretation of subgroup differences. Be properly cautious in appraising their credibility, acknowledge the limitations, and provide supporting or contradictory data from other studies, if any.