Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of liver fibrosis and risk factors in a general population using non-invasive biomarkers (FibroTest)

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Reviewer: Laurent Castera

Reviewer’s report:

In the present study, the authors estimated the prevalence of significant fibrosis using biomarkers (Fibrotest, FT) as first line and transient elastography (TE) as confirmation in 7463 subjects older than 40 seen for a free medical screening in France as well as different screening strategies (non selective versus selective and oriented).

Their results show that significant fibrosis could be suspected in 209 (2.8%) including cirrhosis in 25 (0.3%) but could be confirmed (using the concordance between FT >0.48 and TE >7.1 kPa) in only 52 patients (0.7%) (4 liver biopsies performed).

The leading cause, as could be expected, was NAFLD and the most sensitive selective screening strategy was the metabolic factor-oriented one.

major comments:

The authors should be congratulated for performing this pilot study in such a large community based-population. Screening of the general population for liver diseases is an important and challenging issue and using non invasive methods is a very attractive strategy.

This study has however several methodological limitations (only half of the 209 patients with presumed fibrosis were reinvestigated, fibrosis was “confirmed” (on the basis on the agreement between non invasive methods) in only 52 patients, and finally histological characterization and confirmation was obtained in only 4 patients) that should be acknowledged and discussed in more details by the authors.

minor comments

I would suggest adding an updated reference on the applicability of transient elastography (Castera et al. Hepatology 2010).

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