Reviewer's report

Title: Applicability of a short/rapid 13C-urea breath test for Helicobacter pylori: a retrospective multicenter chart review study

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2011

Reviewer: Rodrigo Machado

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions
1. Inconclusive results should be defined. Also, a reference should be provided for the reference values (the previous validation study).
2. Results. If data in table 2 was analyzed using p for trend (degree of freedom = 1), it should be stated.
3. Conclusions are different in the text and in the abstract - in the text there is no statement suggesting shortening the test to 10-13 min (Text: the test required less than 10 min). Both are not exact. The mean duration was 10.24 min with SD of 2.43 in Germany, for instance - it means that 2.5% have a duration larger than 15 min (as noted, max was over 20).
4. In order to further clarify this point, authors could state the proportion of tests that would be inconclusive or false negative with the test lasting up to a given time (such as 10 or 13 min).
5. References 14 and 15 are 7 and 8. Also, journals abbreviations should be corrected (ref 2, 13). Also, ref 20 - the term "pylori" is lacking.

Discretionary revisions
1. Basic demographic data could be included to describe the study population (gender, age distribution - at least min and max).
2. Advantages of shortening the test should be discussed as well as study limitations.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.