Reviewer's report

Title: Validation of a survey methodology for gastroesophageal reflux disease in China

Version: 2 Date: 15 June 2008

Reviewer: Vic Velanovich

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this is a very well done study and the authors should be congratulated.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. p. 8, "Questionnaires" section. The authors need to state a rationale for why these instruments were chosen for study. Why other GERD-related instruments were excluded. It seems that these instruments assess slightly different aspects of how GERD affects quality of life, therefore, they may not be interchangeable. I think that a table or figure showing the complete questionnaires so that the reader can see what is being asked of the patient would be helpful.

2. p. 10, last two sentences. How was it determine that the subjects considered the questions "relevant and clear." The authors discuss in a few places in the manuscript the cultural nuances of Chinese patients related symptoms to GERD. Was a qualitative analysis done? How much of the original language of the instruments had to be modified to order to gain meaning in Mandarin? This is no trivial issue as your factor analysis of the QOLRAD showed poor construct validity and translation issues may play a role in this.

3. p. 19. I think that the authors have done a great service to researchers wanting to study GERD in Madarin-speaking patients, therefore, how are the authors going to make available there translations of these instruments? Perhaps these translations should be published in this paper.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. p. 11, "Statistical Analysis" section. What is the rationale "50%" of item completion used as cutoff to include or exclude demension scores from analysis? Moreover, in the results section, there is no mention of the frequency of missing items, and if this varied by region.

2. p. 16, 1st full para. Why does not the factor analysis of the QOLRAD deserve its own table?

3. p. 16, "Convergent validity" section. In linear regression analysis, correlations are not "statistically significant." What is statistically significant is that the slope of the regression line is different from 0. A minor point, but it speaks to an understanding of the data analysis used.

Discretionary Revisions

1. p. 17, last sentence of 1st incomplete para. The fact that facilitators considered
some items difficult to explain speaks to a problem of practicality. That is, not matter how good an instruments validity and reliability is, if it is impractical to administer, then it will not be used by other researchers. Can the authors comment?

2. p. 17, last sentence of 1st full paragraph. Are the authors suggesting or recommending that trained facilitators always be used when trying to administer these instruments to Mandarin-speaking patients?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.